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A SONG OF SIXPENCE

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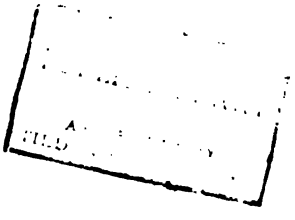

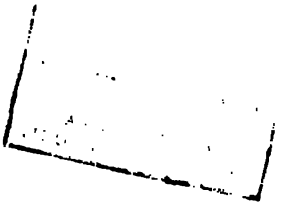

"I wouldn't marry you now," he cried, "if you were the last woman on earth."

A
SONG OF SIXPENCE

BY

FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER

AUTHOR OF

THE BRUTE, THE GREEN GOD, ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

R. F. SCHABELITZ

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PREFACE

One night, about four years ago, I was dining with a party of friends at a well-known New York hotel. The talk had turned, as it so often does, to the subject of women, and, during it, some of my friends began to poke a little good-natured fun at me because of an interview I had given a few days before to one of the New York newspapers. The purpose of this interview had been to discuss a play of mine, then running at a theatre in the city, but through the ingenuity of my interviewer, I had been led into a discussion of marriage. It seems that I had said, rather ponderously, I fear: "Nature has no sense of humor." One of the party, a woman, did not think much of my attempted epigram, and demanded that I explain it. This was not easy—I hazarded something to the effect that Nature was probably too busily engaged in the serious business of running the universe to waste much time upon those who tried to play jokes upon her by trifling with her fundamental laws. Pressed for a case in point, I mentioned the unblushing way in which women make use of the power of sex attraction to procure for themselves the good things of life.

The woman who had questioned my epigram evidently thought as little of my explanation. She asserted, with entire seriousness, that no decent woman could possibly be guilty of anything of the sort. I glanced across the table and caught the eye of one of the men of the party, the editor of a rather widely read magazine. He looked about

the room, then smiled. The place was a veritable Venusberg in its sensual riot of form and color. No mortal man could have hoped to face, unscathed, that array of beauty adorned and unadorned, perfumed, polished, bewigged and bejeweled to within an inch of its life. Apparently, Nature and women were not unalike, in the matter of a sense of humor, and the grimmest humor of it all lay in the fact that while every woman in the place was doing her best to outvie her neighbor in the matter of physical appeal, scarcely any of them had the least conception of what they were about.

The next day I had occasion to call upon my magazine friend, with reference to a serial I was then doing for him. He brought up the conversation of the night before, and suggested that the subject we had been discussing might be made the basis of an interesting novel. The same thought had occurred to me. Which, after all, was likely to prove of more material value to a woman in the affairs of life, physical beauty, or beauty of character? There was, of course, no reason why a woman should not possess both, but did not the fact that the vast majority of women devote the bulk of their time and energy to personal adornment argue that they themselves regard sex appeal as their most valuable asset? Ethical considerations pointed one way, the facts the other. I concluded that the ethics were right, and that if they were not borne out by the facts, it was the fault of women themselves, and of their training.

The subject interested me to such an extent that I determined to get to work at the earliest possible moment upon a novel having it as its theme. Other work, however, which I could not put aside, took up so much of my time that it was over two years before I was able to begin the first chapter. When I did, I realized at once that the subject

was not likely to prove an easy one to treat. I had no desire to write a salacious book, nor any intention to do so, for that matter; the questions involved seemed to me far too important for that, and yet I knew that the deep-rooted antipathy of the English-speaking race to any frank discussion of sex questions had, in the past, caused many a book to be classed as immoral which was in reality only honest. In the end I decided to tell a plain, straightforward story, taken from real life, leaving it to the reader to draw from it the moral, to point which has been the underlying purpose of the book.

It may be said that Emmy Moran is, in some respects, a modern counterpart of Becky Sharp. This is by no means true. Becky is essentially a wicked woman. Her punishment comes, as is so usual in novels, through the bitterness of obscurity and poverty. Emmy, on the other hand, is by no means essentially wicked. By worldly standards, she remains a virtuous woman throughout the book. She finds her punishment, not in physical suffering, not in material want, but through a realization of the fact that, like Esau, she has sold her birthright for a mess of red pottage. Her case is by no means an unusual one. Retribution in real life seldom comes in purely material ways. Many a woman who has parted with her birthright of love, and little children, has come to realize, not in sackcloth and ashes, but in purple and fine linen, Nature's grim lack of humor.

Emmy is a product of the training, a reflection of the morals of the day. Life, as she saw it, taught her but one lesson—to "marry well." One cannot help feeling a sincere pity for her, and for the many like her, and with it a grave sense of responsibility toward women in general. To those who think—and I hold their number to be some-

what larger than is granted by certain disgruntled philosophers—it must be evident that the time has passed when woman can trust solely to the power of sex attraction in her struggle for existence. She is groping, well-nigh unassisted, for other and nobler weapons, for training, for work, for achievement. When she finds them, man will have lost a plaything, and gained a comrade, a friend.

FREDERIC ARNOLD KUMMER.

A SONG OF SIXPENCE

CHAPTER I

When Emmy Moran was quite a young girl, she one day overheard someone say to her mother, "What a beautiful figure your daughter has!" The remark, not intended for Emmy's ears, made a deep impression upon her; she never forgot it, but treasured it up in her mind as a tribute of some sort to her superior worth in the eyes of the world.

Later, when she came to understand more fully, she grew to be inordinately proud of her physical charms. She had a habit, when she undressed at night, of standing before the mirror, turning this way and that, contemplating with infinite satisfaction the soft roundness of her shoulders, the swelling beauty of her breasts, the delicate moulding of her waist and hips. It annoyed her sister Katie excessively; she thought Emmy a fool, and told her so, with sisterly frankness, but Emmy only smiled—an enigmatic smile that had been characteristic of her since childhood, and reminded Katie that if she expected ever to have anything in the world, she would be obliged to depend upon her beauty to get it for her—a decidedly sophisticated attitude for a girl of nineteen, and one that Katie regarded as an evidence of mental immorality.

At such times, Emmy would remind her sister of Maude Evans, the daughter of the Pine Street grocer, who had

married a Chicago theatrical man, reputed to be worth a quarter of a million. Katie's only reply would be a scornful, "Oh, that thing!" with an upturning of her charming nose, as though from the stenches of the bottomless pit. Miss Evans' meteoric career had carried a tale of scandal in its wake, highly charged with the flavor of brimstone.

While Emmy was hugely delighted with her figure, her face was a source of annoyance to her, falling, as it did, far short of her ideals of feminine beauty. Yet it is probable that in this judgment of her facial charms she did herself but scant justice.

Beauty of form is after all not particularly uncommon in this land of racial mongrels, nor, for that matter, beauty of face either, of the commonly accepted sort, having to do with regular features, large eyes and the clear complexion of youth. But Emmy, in spite of her somewhat precocious store of worldly wisdom, was still insufficiently advanced in the ways of the world to appreciate the enormous possibilities of the bewitching visage which, framed in a mass of heavy bronze hair, peered at her nightly from her mirror.

From some Gallic ancestor she had filched a pair of impossible eyes, wide set, amorous, with as yet unfathomed depths of gray-green mystery beneath their sweeping lashes. The lids, somewhat prominent, had a provoking droop at the far corners which seemed to veil a constant tendency to look at the world—at least the masculine portion of it—sidewise. This veiling of the tendency, although quite unconscious on her part, lent to her glance a piquancy more inviting by far than any mere open stare.

Her nose was of that peculiar feline type often found in women of French extraction—long, sensitive, and some-

what rounded at the tip—the nose of a Sarah Bernhardt. Her mouth, large and mobile, like that of a comedian, was to Emmy a source of despair, but none of the beauty pages of the Sunday papers offered the slightest suggestion whereby it might be converted into one of the rosebud type.

A vast deal of red-brown hair, somewhat coarse, but as vitally alive from root to tip as a mass of coiling serpents, made her face appear smaller than it really was. This Emmy tried to remedy by wearing it plastered down over her ears, *a la* Cleo de Merode. It gave her a distinction not accorded to Katie by her elaborate system of rats and puffs.

Her complexion Emmy thought sallow—Katie was all peaches and cream—but a Burne-Jones would have gone into ecstacies over its pale ivory, veiling faded rose leaves. Altogether, Emmy Moran gave promise of attaining, in a short time, that *beauté du diable* which engenders women's hatred, and turns the souls of men to water.

When Emmy characterized her good looks as her only asset in life, she spoke the dismal truth. From her mother, a woman of that unfortunate type whose only appeal to the world is one of pitiful weakness, she inherited nothing, either by birth or training, unless it were a deep-rooted hatred for poverty, and a silent contempt for the relationship of marriage as she saw it daily working out its pitiful destiny under her nose.

Her father, a heavy, unimaginative, somewhat mean-minded man, was the superintendent of a small local brick factory, a position which paid him thirty dollars a week. Of this sum, he allowed his wife ten dollars a week for household expenses, paid eight dollars a week rent, and spent the rest himself. To the two girls he gave nothing,

so that poor Mrs. Moran, who loved her daughters in a pathetic, dog-like way, was obliged to resort to all sorts of weird devices and economies to squeeze from the market money enough to provide the girls with decent wearing apparel. As a result, the table suffered, or perhaps it would be more exact to say that Mrs. Moran suffered, for her better half was apt to complain bitterly, and sometimes threw things, when the meals failed to please him.

Both girls had been through the public schools—Katie was twenty at this time—and both were ready, indeed anxious to go to work, as so many of their friends did in this small Ohio town, but Mr. Moran, through some curious mental crotchet, refused to permit it. "My daughters don't need to be working girls," he would announce, from an imaginary state of prosperity induced by half a dozen glasses of Steinhardt's beer. "Anyone might suppose I was no better than a common laborer." Then he would graciously present them each with a dollar, and assume an air of martyrdom for the remainder of the week. At other times he would lecture them at great length upon the duty they owed their parents—to marry well. "You're both good-lookers," he would say, appraising them coolly from head to toe, "especially Katie. What you want to do is to marry some decent fellow who can give you a good home. If he's got money, so much the better. No sense in marrying a man who can't support you."

Then he would grumble at the round stew, tell Mrs. Moran she was a fool because the beans were scorched, and go off to his lodge, well pleased with himself in the rôle of father and husband.

Katie, mentally not unlike her mother, took his advice in good part, and made herself doubly agreeable to the young men who bought her soda and took her to the mov-

ing picture shows. Deep down in her heart she felt a secret horror of becoming an old maid. Just why the prospect alarmed her she could not have explained, but in some way she knew it was a fate to be dreaded, a just cause for pitying sneers, a catastrophe which she must use every feminine wile to avert, lest she be branded before the world as unmarketable goods.

Emmy, on the contrary, smiled her strange unfathomable smile, that seemed somehow born of untold centuries of feminine wisdom and experience, and wondered whether, after all, her mother had found the profession of marriage an easy and pleasant way of making a living.

She asked her mother this once, in a burst of anger over some unusually exasperating evidence of her father's meanness, but Mrs. Moran was non-committal. "Everything is for the best, dear," she bleated plaintively, her weak mouth trembling, her poor near-sighted eyes peering into some promised future which alone could make amends for the wasted past. "Your father means well. Sometimes he is very trying, but I have always been patient, and tried to do my duty."

Emmy regarded her mother scornfully, her pity for the moment brushed aside by her anger. "If you had stood up for your rights in the beginning," she stormed, "you'd have been fairer to *him*. You've made a doormat of yourself so long that father has come to expect it—you've made him selfish, just by always giving in to him. Unselfishness may be a good thing, in moderation, but when you carry it as far as *you* have, it's worse than selfishness ever could be." Mrs. Moran thought Emmy unjust. The argument ended as always. "The Lord knows what's best for us, my child," followed by tears. Then Emmy, with a great pity in her heart, would put her arms about her mother, and

kiss her, and comfort her with lies, a form of nouris
ment upon which Mrs. Moran thrived, having fed herse
with it continually for twenty-five years.

To Emmy poverty was a dread spectre, ever stalkir
at her elbow, ready to drag her down. All her life tl
household god had been Economy. It dwelt in the ai
poisoned the food, robbed every fancied joy of its savo

Possessing an ample imagination, she amused herse
nightly, while lying in bed, by pretending that some o
had left her a vast fortune, which she forthwith proceed
to spend. Her first purchase was invariably the sealsk
coat which her mother had secretly desired for twenty-fi
years. Mrs. Moran regarded this craving almost in t
light of a mortal sin. Imagine spending twenty-five yea
of one's life wishing for a sealskin coat!

Katie was taller than Emmy, and fairer, possessir
abundantly the beauty of youth. Her eyes, blue and so
like her mother's, looked out upon the world with a con
dence born of much faith and little understanding. H
rounded form gave promise of early *embonpoint*. S
was more popular with the young men of the town th
Emmy, because they understood her better, and she nev
laughed at them. Emmy, on the contrary, was much giv
to ridicule, than which no one thing is likely to make a g
more unpopular. The serious youth—clerks in stor
workers on the railroad, employees at the glass works,
the electric light plant—who called upon the two gi
played the game of love heavily, and with an air of co
scious superiority of sex which annoyed Emmy, becau
it smacked of her father's attitude toward women, and h
father she secretly despised. They expected from th
"girls" a willing and ready compliance with all their var
ing moods. Their purchases of ice cream sodas or theat

tickets were made impressively, as who should say, "Here am I, a magnificent male creature, parting with the product of my labors to amuse and gratify you, an inferior being. Therefore should you be duly grateful, and attentive, and altogether charming, permitting yourself to be kissed whenever occasion offers, devoting yourself exclusively to me, eschewing all other males, at least for the time being, and making yourself generally agreeable in any way that my fancy may dictate."

All these things Katie conscientiously did, and thereby achieved great popularity. Emmy, on the contrary, was apt to be *exigeante*. She would go out of an evening, or stay at home, as her whim might dictate. She could not be propitiated, in moments of temper, by offers of pop-corn, or chocolates, and occasionally, when a caller had spent two or more hours in an egotistical monologue concerning his prowess in this, that or the other direction, she would yawn, instead of being properly impressed, and possibly make sarcastic remarks concerning the color of his neck-tie, or the fit of his shoes. Then, if the fancy seized her, she would be most gracious and charming, and in these moods could win whom she chose.

The girls called her stuck up, and a flirt. The boys dreaded her tongue, were fearful of her smile, which usually presaged some stinging bit of sarcasm, and, with a few exceptions, transferred their attentions to more docile members of the sex. Katie remonstrated with her constantly, pointing out to her that she would never keep her beaux if she refused to humor them, but Emmy went her own way, with her nose in the air, and a secret joy in her heart, because many men, especially around the hotel, turned, whenever she passed, to gaze in undisguised ad-

miration at her slender ankles, her firm, elastic stride, the seductive slanting glance of her eye.

There is in some women a rare quality of sex attraction which seems largely independent of mere beauty, either of face or figure. What curious form of animal magnetism what power or color of aura, is the cause of this phenomenon, science fails to tell us. Yet the fact remains that some women are desired of men far beyond any apparent reason and far beyond any corresponding desire of their own Emmy did not, at this time, know why these men, sophisticated so far as this small Ohio town went, looked at her differently from the way they looked at Katie. She made no effort to attract them, she did not attempt to flirt with them, yet she knew that she could not pass the Border House without causing a mild sensation among the traveling men smoking their after-supper cigars in the chairs on the sidewalk.

This knowledge caused her much inward satisfaction She regarded the admiration of these men as a compliment paid her by those whose opinions in matters of physical attractiveness in women were really worth while. The debutante, bare-armed and throated, sinuous in her clinging gown, no doubt experiences similar feelings of satisfaction when her appearance at her first ball causes a gentle hum of approval to pass around the room. To be desired—to be desired—is it not the eternal cry of the sex

Emmy attributed the outspoken homage these men paid her to her figure, hence her frank admiration of it, nightly She meant to follow her father's advice, to marry, but she also meant to pick and choose—to "marry well," as the match-makers put it, and her experience had already shown her that her wares were marketable in a far wider and more

appreciative circle than that represented by the gum-chewing youths who nightly worshipped at Katie's shrine.

No doubt she was mercenary, but life, as it existed about her, had made her so. She did not believe that love, in itself, was the great panacea for all human ills. She had a very distinct idea that it was only a romantic illusion, and one which yearly slew its tens of thousands. It was her constant endeavor to be honest with herself. Hypocrisy she despised. Possibly, in striving for truth, she fell into the morass of materialism, but at least the fight she made against self-delusion was a creditable one.

CHAPTER II

The town of Gainesville, Ohio, is distinguished principally by being exactly like every other small town in the Middle West. It is on the main line of a great railroad. It has a new union station. Its streets are paved with vitrified brick. It boasts of a brewery, a glass works, a structural iron plant, a brick factory, a soldiers' and sailors' monument, and at least two large department stores, where New York styles may be had at about the time that New York is beginning to abandon them for those to which Paris has just accorded the same treatment. There is also the hotel; in fact, there are several with signs to that effect, but the Borden House is always called "the hotel" because it is the largest, and the traveling men all stop there.

In such a place we are able to study life, as it were, in miniature. In great metropolitan centres it becomes so complex as almost to defy analysis, but here we have it, as in a drop of water fixed on the microscope's slide, ready to show us all its phases in their simplest and most easily understood form. Without difficulty we discern that dim and unhappy borderland between the upper and the under worlds, where the battle between respectability on the one hand and utter submersion on the other goes ceaselessly on; where Poverty stalks openly, preparing his victims for the sacrifice, while from both above and below his twin brother, Vice, stretches forth a bony but silken-covered hand.

Emmy, caught thus between the upper and nether millstones, grew to dislike all men. The sort above her, the sort she desired, she feared, because she knew that to them poverty spelled opportunity. The others she feared less, but more openly despised, because of the crudity of their methods. They were a precocious, cigarette-smoking, pool-playing lot, proud of their conquests of women, boasting of them loudly, regarding themselves as very devilish fellows indeed. The result of their operations may be seen after dark, crowding the night life of our big cities, drab, hopeless creatures, who laugh at love because it has come to them in the guise of a destroyer.

Between these two classes of men, Emmy found a third class, decent, honest, self-respecting workers who knew women but slightly, and feared them accordingly. These came but seldom, squirmed uncomfortably on their chairs, conversed in monosyllables, chiefly about the weather, and went their way unregretted. Thus Emmy came to be very much alone, as is usual with women who have aspirations beyond their class. With Katie, however, it was different. She had no aspirations beyond the securing of a sober and industrious husband.

The young man who had of late spent most of his spare time and money on Katie Moran was a clerk in the hardware department of James Borden & Company's store. He was tall, and somewhat anemic in appearance, with sandy hair, a prominent nose, and a whimsical smile that at times made him seem almost attractive. At least, so Emmy said. Katie found him attractive, even without the smile, for he came nearer her ideal of a husband than any of the other young men with whom she had been going.

Just why this was, Katie could hardly say. Emmy told her it was because he had a soul, but Katie resented

the remark and considered it one of Emmy's obscure jokes. In any event, Harvey Cook was apparently very much in earnest in his wooing, and came almost nightly to take Katie out. In the beginning, Emmy had been in the habit of accompanying them, but when Harvey brought around a fellow-clerk, who held forth in the shoe department, and introduced him to her, Emmy felt that it was a gentle hint that "three's a crowd" and so left them afterwards to their own devices.

The shoe clerk lasted with Emmy only two evenings. On the first he bought ice cream, suggested a walk in the park, and insisted on holding her hand. She permitted it, although it annoyed her. On the second evening he added a moving picture show to the ice cream, and persuaded Emmy to take a stroll out along the banks of the river, a favorite walk of young couples in summer, but not much frequented in April. He seemed to be hunting the shadowy places as persistently as Emmy endeavored to avoid them. Under the lee of an old barn he attempted to kiss her—indeed, did kiss her, if a kiss be not regarded as a mutual affair. Emmy was surprised, but endured it, listlessly enough, because she felt that she should perhaps offer some repayment for the ice cream and the moving pictures. It was not a thrilling experience; the shoe clerk's breath reeked of cheap cigarettes, which he had been nervously smoking all the evening, and he seemed so delighted with his success in the osculatory line that he proceeded to embrace her with a fervor which indicated a strong desire to collect in advance for many future ice creams and other expenditures of that nature.

Emmy was not alarmed. She merely pushed him away with an exclamation of disgust, and insisted that they return home at once. The shoe salesman knew his women.

He had expected to be pushed away; that, indeed, was part of the game, but there were different ways of doing it. Only the week before he had had a precisely similar experience, but on that occasion the push had been accompanied by a shrill giggle, and an "Oh, Mr. Brown—tee! hee!—how can you!"—and then a little foolish attempt to run away from him, with a laugh over the shoulder that invited pursuit as her ancestors doubtless had invited it, fifty thousand years before, in the jungle.

Mr. Brown regarded himself as a man who thoroughly understood women, but Emmy's manner was new to him. He felt, somehow, that she was in earnest, and immediately his pet theory, that if you can kiss a girl you can accomplish anything else you desire, clattered about his ears. So he took Emmy home, sulkily, and came no more, and Katie and her lover walked out alone.

Harvey Cook was a man of a very different sort. He had introduced the shoe clerk only because that evening they had happened to walk home from the store together. His intentions toward Katie were entirely honorable. He belonged to the Young Men's Christian Association, did not drink or smoke, and exercised regularly in the gymnasium. Emmy wondered if this accounted for his sallow face and lack-lustre eyes, but when he smiled she forgave him. Undoubtedly Harvey had a soul, also he was tired of living alone, and had visions of a little cottage, later to be ivy-covered, on Willow Avenue, to which he would betake himself, each evening after leaving the store, to find Katie waiting on the doorstep. It is the oldest vision, the sweetest dream in the world. Happy are those who realize it—on twelve dollars a week, it is not easy.

So these two walked through the sweet spring evenings, and talked of everything but the big, vital instinct which

drove them to mate, the instinct whereby, through bird and beast, and tree and flower, and all living things, Nature works her age-old miracle, bidding her children increase and multiply.

The music of the spring throbbed also in Emmy's heart, but it responded to no chord within the ability of the shoe salesman or his kind to strike. She, too, felt the mystery of the budding leaf, the blossoming flower, the lure of the sweet spring winds, the heart bursting into song with the birds. But it was a song she sang alone, because there was no one with whom she cared to sing it. She even avoided the vicinity of the Borden House. The traveling men took on a new boldness, as winter's ices thawed, and one of them, a stout, red-faced man, who smelled strongly of whisky, had followed her for several blocks and tried to scrape an acquaintance with her.

These attentions no longer pleased Emmy—she began to have a sense of being hunted—of being surrounded by a world of men, each ready at the first false step to strike her down, as legitimate prey. So she kept more and more to herself, and read ceaselessly. And all these bright-covered books from the public library taught her but one lesson—to demand from the man to whom she might ultimately yield herself a price commensurate with her worth. Always the heroines married the men they loved, but these men, it seemed, were always brilliant, talented, handsome and rich. She found no beautiful women marrying men who were poor, or ugly, or unsuccessful. The rule of the world seemed to be that the unattractive women became nice old maids, who looked after the children and knitted them worsted sacques, while their beautiful sisters had proposals by the score, and were confronted only by the problem of deciding between the elderly nobleman who

could offer them a tiara, or the brilliant young American who dominated railroads, or inherited a trust or two. And she further observed that the women who thus won the prizes in life's lottery were not always good women, in the strictest sense of the word—sometimes they even had pasts, more or less clouded, but invariably they were beautiful, invariably they were attractive to men, and invariably they married the only really desirable man in the book. Thus she came more and more to regard her good looks as a tangible, marketable asset.

It is not to be supposed that Emmy put her thoughts into such definite and material form. She was in no sense hard, or coarse. But in whatever form the ideas flitted through her brain, the impression remained that a woman's duty consisted in disposing of herself to the highest or at least the most desirable bidder. White-haired old ladies, who would have been shocked at the suggestion, nevertheless employed all their time and energies in ceaseless maneuvers, to the one end that their daughters might marry eligible men. An eligible man apparently meant a man of wealth, substance, position. They offered no encouragement to suitors who, whatever their moral or mental attributes, were out at the elbows, while the mantle of wealth and title was permitted to cover a multitude of sins. Hence, if Emmy regarded her beauty as an asset in life, she merely showed her courage in admitting what no amount of hypocritical pretence could make any the less a fact.

One night, when Emmy had spent the entire evening reading a lurid story of life among the British aristocracy, Katie came into the room with a new and somewhat sheepish expression upon her pretty face, and announced that Harvey had proposed.

Emmy greeted the announcement without particular enthusiasm. She had long expected it—she wondered that it had not come before. Somehow she felt that if she loved a man he would never have to propose. Such a burning, all-consuming passion as she felt the occasion demanded, would leave no room for question, or doubt.

"We're going to be married in June," she heard Katie saying.

Emmy got up—she had been lying on the bed in the room they occupied jointly—and began to take off her shoes. "How much does he make?" she inquired, absently.

Katie seemed annoyed. "What difference does that make?" she asked, in an aggrieved tone. "He loves me."

"You'll have to have something more to live on than that." Emmy pointed the remark by holding out the shoe she had just taken off and looking at it ruefully. "You'll have to have shoes, for one thing, and so will I, though I don't know where I'm going to get them." She threw the shoes spitefully into the corner and began to take off her waist.

Katie sat down on the edge of the bed. "What's the matter, Emmy?" she asked. "You're not angry, are you, because *you* haven't been asked? You know I've always told you if you'd only be a little more agreeable——"

"Katie, you're silly. I wouldn't marry Harvey for anything."

"Why not? Isn't he good enough for you?" This disparagement of her husband-to-be made Katie angry.

"Now, Katie, don't get peevish. I like Harvey immensely, but—speaking for myself, I really think I'd rather marry a man with a little more money."

"Money isn't everything. Harvey's so good, and I—I

love him." There was a note of feeling in Katie's voice that made Emmy turn.

"I know, dear, but—oh, well—don't you see? Look at mother. She and father were just like you and Harvey, once. She was pretty, too—I've seen her picture, and he was—well—different. Now look at them. Mother's worn to the bone. Father's a pig. All they've got to show for it is *us*, and we've got to turn around and do the same thing all over again. I won't, for one." She strode up and down the room excitedly, her beautiful body, freed from its restraining garments, moving with the supple grace of a fawn.

Katie looked at her sister in astonishment. "Good heavens, Emmy, how you do talk! You've got to marry somebody, haven't you?"

"Why?"

"Oh, well—you've—you've got to live."

"I want to do more than just—live."

"And a woman wants a home, and—and children."

The idea of wanting children had not occurred to Emmy. It was a matter to which she had never given any particular thought. "Do you really want children, Katie?" she asked, surprised.

"Of course I do." Katie blushed slightly. "And so does Harvey. He loves them."

Emmy made no reply. She stood before the mirror and began to comb out her long, heavy hair. Presently Katie spoke. "Don't you ever intend to marry, Emmy?"

"Yes—when I can find a man who will give me what I want."

"I suppose you mean money?"

"Yes—money—for one thing. It's no harder to care

for a man who has money than for one who hasn't. Ought to be easier, seems to me."

"Huh! That kind don't marry girls like us."

"How about Maude Evans?"

"Emmy, for goodness' sake, don't talk about *that* creature. Everybody in town knows what *she* was."

"I don't know anything of the sort, and neither do you. People say so, I know, but maybe they're only envious, because she's got an auto."

Katie refused to continue the argument. "Well, Emmy," she said, "I hope you're not going to be like her. I hope you marry some good man, who will take care of you and give you a nice little home. You won't be happy till you do."

"Don't worry," Emmy laughed, looking over her shoulder at her sister. "I'm not going to die a virgin."

Katie turned, horrified. "You're awful, Emmy!" she gasped. "How can you say such things!"

"Why," asked Emmy, her mouth full of hairpins, "there's nothing wrong in that, is there? If I'd said 'old maid,' you wouldn't have said a word. It's the same thing, isn't it?" She stretched her long arms above her head, drew a deep breath, then let it escape slowly from her lips. It was not a sigh, but rather an expression of conscious power. She looked at herself in the glass and smiled approvingly. "There oughtn't to be any danger, I should think," she said. "I could be married in a week if I wanted to, but I'm not going to make a fool of myself." She threw her arms about her sister and gave her a great hug. "I'm so glad about you and Harvey, Katie. It's splendid. Let's go to bed."

CHAPTER III

It wanted two weeks to Easter, but already the trees were putting forth a brave show of green. On warm, southern slopes the grass sparkled in the sun like huge splashes of emerald. All nature seemed arraying itself in gayer garb, as though trying to cover up and hide the dull-brown of winter. Even in the human breast the desire for a brighter and livelier exterior made itself felt. Business at the Borden store had never been so brisk, the number of customers never so large. Hats, with violets, with lilacs, with flowers the colors of the rainbow, that never were on land or sea, traveled to the four quarters of the town in large, important-looking boxes. Smart foulards, linens, silks and satins went scurrying here and there in obedience to the power of the almighty dollar.

Katie, with savings long hoarded for the occasion, invested in a pair of new ties, a clam-shell hat and a suit of green etamine marked down to $10.98. Emmy, who never saved anything, and spent what little she had on Katie, turned her last year's blue serge skirt and invested in a bunch of artificial flowers which she stuck coquettishly on one side of her old straw. The result did not please her, but she laughed and consoled herself by thinking of all the wonderful things she was going to have, some day. She adored beautiful clothes, but she could not bring herself to wear cheap finery, so she contented herself with none.

Poor Mrs. Moran, knowing the instincts of the girlish

heart, produced from her worn purse a five-dollar bill, which she had saved through many weeks of "doing without" and gave it to Emmy, with a patient smile. "Get yourself some—some shoes, dear," she said, pathetically. "There's a sale at Borden's this week—three-dollar ties at $1.98. And you really ought to have a new waist." Emmy might have added, "and stockings, and underwear, and a suit, and hat, and gloves, and all else besides," but she never willingly hurt her mother, so she kissed her instead, and went downtown and bought two pairs of shoes —the second pair for Mrs. Moran, and invested the balance of the money in a bottle of perfume. She loved perfume, and Katie usually depended on her for her supply.

The two girls, after helping their mother with the housework in the morning, were in the habit of going downtown in the interval between breakfast and dinner, the latter meal occurring at one o'clock. They generally ended up at Borden's, not because they intended to buy anything, but because it was an objective point—a place where they might feast their eyes upon the newest Paris creations, and, of late, a place where Katie and her fiancé might have opportunity to exchange a few words. Harvey was not so busy, in the hardware department, as were the clerks on the other floors; people for the time being had hardware enough, it seemed. Katie was thus often able to chat with him for half an hour or more, while Emmy investigated the latest styles in monkey-wrenches and tack-hammers, and pretended to be vastly interested.

On one of these occasions, bored beyond measure by the dulness of her surroundings, she crossed over to the shoe department on the other side of the basement, and in desperation began to try on ties. She had no thought of buying any—the $1.98 bargains still reposed at home in

all their pristine glory—but it was interesting to see all the new styles, and play at buying, as though she were the wife of a millionaire.

She saw her quondam admirer, Mr. Brown, some distance away, waiting on a crotchety old countryman, and smiled amiably, out of an excess of good nature. He nodded an unsmiling acknowledgment of her greeting and turned his back.

Emmy had tried on a dozen pairs of ties, patent leather, suede, tan and buckskin, ranging from four to seven dollars a pair, and had told the patient girl who waited on her that she would "look elsewhere before making a decision," when suddenly she observed a spontaneous galvanic action pass through the score or more of clerks. She looked about for the cause, and beheld a gentleman, ruddy of countenance, smiling and bland, passing through the room, casting a rigidly inspecting eye on all about him. It was Mr. Borden, making his morning tour of the store. He always did it, after opening his mail, to show his employees that he was, as he expressed it, "on the job."

James Borden, Jr., was one of Gainesville's most prominent citizens. He had inherited the store, as well as the hotel, from his father, Colonel Borden, a native of New Jersey, who had recently passed away in an unsuccessful attempt to consume a quart of whisky daily, while still managing his extensive business affairs. Colonel Borden was a strong man, and could, no doubt, have done either the one or the other successfully, but the two together overtaxed his strength.

His son, some thirty-eight at this time, was a handsome man, well built and ruddy, with the ruddiness of the steady but conservative drinker. He belonged to several frater-

nal orders, had twice been elected Mayor, and had also served on the Governor's staff. Gainesville looked up to him as a man of means, substance, prominence. Yet in spite of his wealth he led a simple life. His big red touring car served only to convey him sedately from his hotel to his bank, from his bank to his department store, from his department store to the Hoosier Club, or back to his handsome residence on Garfield Avenue. He was unmarried, and therefore much sought after by all mothers having daughters of marriageable age, but he persisted in his celibacy, in spite of all the traps set for his snaring.

Most of his fellow-clubmen wondered at Jim Borden's quiet mode of life. Those few who were his intimates knew that in the fast life of Chicago, or around Times Square, New York, Jim Borden was noted for many things, but quietness was not one of them.

He made little trips to one or the other of these cities almost monthly, ostensibly to look after the affairs of certain out-of-town companies in which he was popularly supposed to be interested. The general run of his fellow-townsmen believed Jim Borden to be a prominent figure, both in Wall Street and on the Chicago Board of Trade. Jim, however, did not dabble in such prosaic forms of amusement. He went to New York, as he went to Chicago, to hunt women. It was his favorite diversion, and he not only found a superior grade in these great market places of all human commodities, but he was also able to indulge in his pastime unobserved by the vigilant eye of Mrs. Grundy. His code of morality, like that of his class, knew only the sin of being found out. The rules of business constituted his creed. The President of the Wabash National Bank could not slap the proprieties in the face, at home, without a corresponding loss of prestige, and

consequently of business. In New York it was different. There, though the night has a thousand eyes, it conveniently winks.

Taken by and large, James Borden, Jr., was a very respectable member of society. He did not get drunk (at least not in public, although there were stories of gay champagne parties whispered in more than one musical comedy dressing-room), he was honest (since to be otherwise was not good business), he paid his bills (it was a matter of pride with him, and not difficult, when one has the money), he worked hard when he worked, and played with equal energy when he played, taking his fun where he found it, and paying for it liberally and joyously. He boasted that no man or woman could say that he had ever failed to give them a square deal.

He passed close to Emmy as she rose, and looked her up and down with a critical eye, then bowed and inquired if she had been suited.

She knew him well. She had heard him deliver two Fourth of July orations, and had once seen him leading a parade, in all the glory of his uniform as a member of the Governor's staff. She smiled pleasantly, and said that she thought she would not buy anything that day. Mr. Borden was not satisfied. He glanced down at her worn high shoes, which had painfully survived the winter. "Here, Miss Atkinson," he called, sharply, to one of the saleswomen, "wait on this lady."

"But—I've seen all I care to," protested Emmy, weakly. "I'm not ready to buy anything this morning."

Borden noticed her hesitation, with quick appreciation of its reason. He knew Emmy. She had passed the hotel too many times for him to have any doubts as to her identity; her father he also knew as a substantial man,

though in a small way. As a matter of fact, he himself was one of the directors of the brick works where Mr. Moran held forth as superintendent. "You have an account here, Miss Moran?" he inquired, solicitously.

"No—I—I haven't." Emmy admitted the fact with a certain sense of shame, as though she had in some way fallen short of what was expected of her.

Borden turned to the clerk. "Let Miss Moran have anything she wishes," he commanded, then bowed and passed into the next room. Emmy sat down. She seemed all of a sudden to have attained an added value in the eyes of the young woman who had been waiting on her. She once more tried on the grey buckskin ties. They fitted to perfection.

"Shall I send them?" the girl asked, and took out her pad. Emmy gave her name and address, mechanically. The ties were five-fifty. She was lost.

There was a certain element in Emmy Moran's nature which made her an extremist. She knew that she could as easily pay a bill of five hundred and fifty dollars as one of five-fifty. She forgot all about Katie, amorously taking up the time of Harvey Cook in the hardware department. She seemed to have become, all of a sudden, a person of importance. From the shoe department she ascended to the hosiery counter, from there to the ready-made suits and so on to the hat counter. She was in the store nearly two hours. Katie thought she had gone home. When Emmy started up Main Street she had bought goods to the value of eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents, and hadn't the remotest idea how she was going to pay for them. It had been one grand, delirious, sartorial spree, and now that she had come back to earth she hardly believed the things would be delivered at all, nor did she

much care. The excitement of buying—buying, with never a thought of the price—of the eternal "Can I afford it?" or "Haven't you something cheaper?" had intoxicated her; now that it was all over the material results seemed of but slight importance.

She arrived at home just in time for dinner, and ate in subdued silence. Something in her father's forbidding manner warned her that he must never know of her morning's escapade. Her mother was fluttering between laughter and tears at the thought of Katie's coming wedding, and was trying to inspire some enthusiasm in the dull soul of her liege lord, but he, concerned with the installation of a new brick machine, refused to respond, and, lighting his pipe, hurried back to the factory.

At four-thirty the yellow delivery wagon, bearing on its sides the purple beehive which bespoke the Borden store, stopped at the door and delivered a variety of packages, all consigned to Miss Emily Moran. Her mother was astonished. She thought there must be some mistake, but Emmy reassured her. "Just a few things I got, mother," she said, and, assisted by Katie, conveyed them to her room.

When the great secret had been imparted to Katie, the latter looked at her sister in undisguised admiration. "Well, Emmy, you certainly have got nerve!" she gasped, and assisted her in trying on the new finery. The suit was perfection. It had cost fifty dollars, and made of Emmy a new being. The hat, at fifteen, was a creation. The shoes, the waist, the silk stockings, all added to the marvel. When Mrs. Moran came into the room she did not at first know her daughter. Then she sat down on the bed and began to cry.

Emmy explained to her the circumstances, but she re-

fused to be comforted. At first she was sure that Emmy had gone wrong—it was a not uncommon fate of girls in their walk in life, and when the true state of affairs was finally made clear to her, she was scarcely less perturbed. "Your father will be furious," she wailed. "He will never pay the bill—never. Oh, Emmy—how could you—how could you?" The magnitude of the sum appalled her. Poor woman, in all her life she had never spent over twenty dollars for clothes at any one time, and then only in fear and trembling.

The upshot of the matter was that they decided to say nothing to Mr. Moran about it. Emmy declared, indignantly, that she would go to work and earn the money herself, in spite of her father's objections—Mrs. Moran was for doing nothing, her invariable panacea for all ills. "The Lord will show us a way, my child," she murmured, reverently. "Not a sparrow falls but He knows it." The poor lady seemed actually to believe that the Divine Being would, in some miraculous and inscrutable way, interest Himself personally in the matter of settling Emmy's bill for silk stockings and a grey tailor-made suit. Emmy did not argue the question. She had the clothes, the only real clothes she had ever had in her life. "They'll get paid for, somehow," she said, bravely, and fell to admiring the fit of her new skirt, as it bound tightly her gracious hips.

Now that Emmy had her new outfit, she feared to wear it. She knew, instinctively, what the other girls of her acquaintance would think. Such clothes, in her circle, could not be other than a badge of infamy, so they reposed safely in her closet, to be taken out and admired, tried on and taken off, without ever so much as passing the door. Easter came and went. The day was rainy, and Emmy went forth in her old blue serge and her $1.98

ties. Katie was in tears, because she could not wear her new etamine, but consoled herself with the thought that really stylish people no longer dressed up on Easter Sunday.

Katie's wedding was set for the first day of June. It was to be a quiet affair at home, with Dr. Culver, of the First Baptist Church, officiating. Mr. Moran had at last awakened to the importance of the occasion, whereby one of his offspring, at least, would be taken off his hands. He became almost genial, presented the bride-to-be with a massive-looking brass bed which he got for $22.50 at Bernstein's Bargain Bazaar, and appeared on the scene, the day of the wedding, in high good humor, the result of a little advance celebration of the event which he had conducted in the back room of Rullman's saloon.

Here he had held forth to several of his cronies on the results of properly raising children, and pointed with pride to himself as a shining example of the dutiful American father. "It's been a hard job, there's no denying that," he said, "but I done my duty, thank God! I set them girls the right sort of an example, and you see the result. Here, Tim, set 'em up again, and don't put so much suds on 'em. There's profit in them bubbles." He winked at the others and went on with his harangue. "Them girls never had to ask twice for anything, no, sir. I've always been a generous father to 'em, but I raised 'em with a firm hand, no monkey-business about *my* girls. Some fathers would let their daughters go out and work, taking the bread out of some honest fellow's mouth. Not me. No, sir. My daughters stayed at home, where they belonged. That's a woman's place—home. All this new-fangled talk about women's rights, and suffragettes and such makes me sick. Let 'em learn to cook and raise chil-

dren, and take care of their homes and their husbands. That's sphere enough for 'em. Look at my wife. When I married her she worked in a candy store. I took her out of that pretty quick and she's never had to do a lick of work since. No, sir, just set back in her own home and enjoyed life." He gulped down his beer, thirstily. "Drink up, boys, and we'll have another round."

There were not many guests at the wedding, perhaps a score in all, members of the immediate families of the bride and groom, the intimate friends of Harvey and Katie, and a few others. The wedding party had gathered, the minister was clearing his throat and thumbing his book, but Emmy, who was to act as bridesmaid, was nowhere to be seen.

Suddenly a queer silence fell upon the assembled company, followed by a rustling of skirts, and a craning of necks toward the door. A vision in grey stood on the threshold. It was Emmy. Her father, somewhat uncertain of eye after his celebration of the morning, did not recognize her. The others gasped in silence.

The grey suit was of the sheath variety. It came barely to her ankles. Its scant lines displayed her superb figure with almost the frankness of a bathing suit. The open-work waist, beneath the silk-lined coat, was generous in its revelations. The new style corsets gave to her carriage a willowy perfection that made the other women in the room stare in silent envy. Flashing grey silk stockings over the buckskin ties invited attention to her trim ankles, and revealed more than a suggestion of the graceful curves above. Altogether, Emmy might very well have stepped from her automobile at Broadway and Forty-second Street and been quite in the picture, but here!—a Highlander in kilts would not have been more out of place.

In spite of the sensation she had created there was nothing to do but go ahead with the ceremony. The mere fact that the bride's sister wore a new gown could hardly be considered a matter of vast importance. Yet there was no one in the room, with the exception of the principal actors in the scene, who was not more busily engaged in casting furtive glances at Emmy's silk stockings, or speculating as to the cost of her suit, than in following the droning words of the Reverend Doctor Culver, or the almost inaudible responses of the bride and groom.

When it was all over, and the wedding breakfast had been eaten, and the rice and old shoes dutifully thrown, when the happy pair had departed for the station in a carriage, and the guests had gone their several ways, Mr. Moran called Emmy into the dining-room, where he sat consuming the remains of the wedding breakfast.

He eyed her angrily, resentfully, and asked, in a rough voice, where she had gotten her "sporty clothes." "You look like a cheap actress," he announced. "Where'd you get 'em?" He was quite certain that he himself had not provided the wherewithal.

Emmy hesitated. Her first impulse was to tell her father the truth, and be done with it, at the same time declaring her intention to go to work. Then she thought of her mother. It was Mr. Moran's habit to blame everything on his wife. Emmy could mentally picture the poor, frail, faded creature, cringing beneath the bitter condemnation her father would mete out to her. Everything creditable in his daughters' actions he took to himself as an evidence of his example and precept. Every fault was but another evidence of their mother's mistakes in their training. Emmy could not bring herself to loose this torrent of wrath upon her mother's head. Eighty-

seven dollars and fifty cents, for which he, her father, would be legally responsible! It was safe to say that for twenty years to come, should Mrs. Moran live that long, the matter of this bill would stand, damning evidence of her folly, her stupidity, her utter incapacity in the bringing up of her children.

Emmy lied with a calm face. "I saved up the money," she said, quietly. "I've been saving it for three years. I got the things at a sale. They only cost twenty-five dollars."

Mr. Moran was satisfied, so far as the method of acquisition of the things was concerned. He possessed an abysmal ignorance of the value of women's clothes, never having bought a sufficient quantity to give him much information on the subject.

"Wasted twenty-five dollars on *that*." He pointed an accusing finger at Emmy. "I never expected to see a daughter of mine go about looking like a——" He did not finish—perhaps the missing word stuck in his throat, as he saw Emmy's face hardening. "Go take 'em off," he commanded. "Take 'em off," and pointed to the door.

She went to her room, took off the things, threw herself on the bed and began to cry. Life seemed, after all, very cruel and bitter.

Her mother came in after a while. Evidently her father had been talking to her, for there were traces of tears in her eyes. Emmy sat up and threw the masses of hair back from her face. "Father's a fool!" she said. "I hate him!"

"Honor thy father and thy mother, my child," quoted Mrs. Moran, sententiously. "Remember what the Good Book says."

Emmy stretched out her legs, still encased in the grey

silk stockings, and looked at them. "Is there anything really immoral about silk stockings, mother?" she asked.

Mrs. Moran was nonplussed. She had never understood Emmy, even as a child. As the girl grew older she understood her less and less.

"Why, Emmy—what—what do you mean?"

"Father said I looked like a—a——" she hesitated. Her tone supplied the meaning.

Mrs. Moran was clasping and unclasping her thin, bony hands nervously in her lap. It was a habit of years, and reminded one, somehow, of a cat "kneading dough." "Emmy!" she exclaimed. "Your father has old-fashioned ideas. He—he doesn't like the way women dress at present. And, besides, I think you *did* look a little—a little—suggestive."

Emmy laughed. Her mood had changed. "Did I, really?" she said. The thought seemed not displeasing to her. "Do you know, mother, women's clothes nowadays are just *made* to make men look at them."

"It isn't right, my child. In my day it would have been thought highly indecent for a woman to even think of such a thing."

Emmy drew up her knees against her bosom and encircled them with her arms. "Nonsense, mother. All men are alike. All they want is to get you—honestly or dishonestly. And the more a woman makes them want to get her the harder they'll try."

"My child!" Mrs. Moran's voice expressed her utter horror.

"It's true. Do you suppose Harvey doesn't know that Katie is pretty? Do you suppose he doesn't know she has a good figure? Wouldn't he be horribly disappointed if he'd find out that she hadn't—that it was just—padding?"

Mrs. Moran rose from the bed in protest, but Emmy went on.

"Mother, you know perfectly well there isn't a woman in Gainesville who wouldn't work herself to the bone to make herself more attractive to men if she could. That's what all these clothes, and laces, and silk stockings, and hair-dressers, and beauty-parlors are for." She stretched out her arms as though toward some distant future, and rose. "I'm glad I don't have to worry—yet."

"Emmy, I can't imagine where you got all these awful ideas. *I* certainly never taught you such things."

The girl put her arms about her mother's neck and kissed her. "No, mother. I guess they just came naturally. You see—I think about things a good deal. Some day, when I have lots and lots of money, I'm going to get *you* some pretty clothes, too." She patted her mother's withered cheek softly. "You used to be mighty good-looking once. You might be now if you had half a chance."

Mrs. Moran bridled and colored self-consciously. Her good looks had not troubled her greatly for twenty years, but Emmy's words touched a responsive chord.

"Yes," she mused. "Your father used to say I was the prettiest girl in Gainesville." She pushed back her hair, straightened her bent shoulders and nervously adjusted the imitation lace fichu at her neck.

Emmy laughed mischievously, but when her mother asked her what she was laughing at, she refused to say. "Women are pretty much alike the world over, I guess," was all Mrs. Moran could get out of her.

That night Emmy fished out of her bureau drawer an old diary, and began to write in it. She felt the need of some form of self-expression, and no other was at hand.

The last entry in the diary had been made two years before. It read:

"To-day was mamma's birthday and we went to see the 'Prisoner of Zenda.' It was grand. The leading man had dark eyes and was very handsome. I have decided to become an actress."

She smiled over this for a long time. Nineteen seems centuries older than seventeen, at least when one is nineteen. After a while she took up her pen and wrote:

"It isn't necessary to go on the stage to be an actress, and the pay is often better." She regarded this sentence with pride for several moments, and then proceeded to paste in the book a clipping she had cut from a newspaper.

"To win a man—let him do the worrying.

Don't discard your rats and puffs.

Lace as tight as the law and your constitution will allow.

Use a manufactured complexion if nature has forgotten to make your cheeks bloom, but let it be a neat job.

Don't wear he clothes.

Insist that you hate women who boss men. 'Tis a cruel lie, but easy to tell.

Put your temper in cold storage and keep it there until after the parson has done his worst.

Any really pretty girl with a svelte figure and a nice disposition will find that a careful application of the above rules will win her not one husband, but several. Care should be taken, though, to win them in rotation rather than in bunches. It's much better form."

CHAPTER IV

On the first day of July, Emmy received a communication from Borden & Co., containing a statement of her account, upon which was stamped in large, red letters the words, "Past Due." Under this was a polite request that a check be forwarded at once. She put the statement in her bureau drawer, along with one she had previously received, and fell to wondering what form of punishment such an attractive man as Mr. Borden would mete out to her for having done just what he had urged her to do. He seemed such a kindly, genial person—surely *he* would not do anything to injure her. Thus consoled, she went her accustomed way and, with little to interest her at the moment, began, with unwonted industry, to manufacture quantities of underwear. One might have supposed she was preparing a trousseau, but no such thought occupied Emmy's mind. Somewhere, in the recesses of her brain, there had arisen an intuition that before long she would be leaving the town of Gainesville.

On the sixteenth of the month a gentleman called to see her, about three in the afternoon. Mrs. Moran was all a-flutter—he was such a distinguished-looking person—what could he want with her girl?—was it any one she had ever met? Emmy went down to see, equally mystified.

The gentleman was a collector from Borden & Co., and he informed her, with excessive politeness, that the firm would like a check in settlement of her account. He felt sure that she must have overlooked the small amount, and

apologized for bringing it to her attention. Would it suit her pleasure to give the check to him, or to mail it to the office?

Emmy gasped. "I—I'm afraid I won't be able to pay it—this month."

The collector's manner, in spite of his suavity, was distinctly businesslike.

"Then perhaps you would prefer to make a partial payment to-day—and leave the balance until later. Say fifty on account." He paused, fountain-pen in air, waiting expectantly.

"I'm afraid I can't make any payment at all this month," she replied, her face crimson with mortification.

The man took out a notebook and glanced at one of its pages. "This is your first account with the firm, is it not, Miss Moran?" he inquired.

"Yes. I—Mr. Borden said it would be all right. He—he suggested that I open it."

The collector looked up, gravely. "Our rules require payment in thirty days, miss. Your account has already run over sixty. Unless you can give us some definite assurances, I am afraid——" He paused, the unfinished sentence carrying a suggestion of unknown terrors.

"But—I—Mr. Borden told me——" she hesitated, greatly confused. After all, what was there that she could say?

"Of course, if you can arrange the matter with Mr. Borden," the collector replied, "I have nothing to say. He has given me no instructions in the matter. I work under orders from Mr. Graham, our manager. All accounts not paid in sixty days are placed in my hands, unless special instructions are given. We do not question your intention to pay, Miss Moran. We bring the matter to

your attention in this way only because otherwise we could not carry on our business. I must either be able to give the office some satisfactory assurances of payment, or turn in the account as bad. In that event it goes to our legal department." He rose and carefully replaced notebook and pen in his pocket. "Perhaps you had better see Mr. Borden himself," he concluded, as he took up his hat. "He is usually in his office from four until five-thirty, and from nine till eleven in the forenoon." With grave politeness he bowed himself out.

Emmy stood still by the parlor door, gazing vacantly after him. To be poor was such a bitter, humiliating thing. She realized that she must see Mr. Borden—otherwise the whole matter would be brought to her father's attention, and her mother would come in for the brunt of his wrath. Yet what could she say to him—except that she could not pay. Perhaps he would let her have more time—would wait until she had secured a position and earned the money. She glanced at the clock and saw that it was half-past three, then ran up the steps and began hurriedly to dress.

Emmy did not stop to analyze the instinct which caused her to use every effort to look her best. She was not going to Mr. Borden's office with any thought of trying to fascinate him—the matter was merely a business affair, yet she made her toilette with greater care than she would have made it had she been going to meet a lover. She felt that she must make a good impression; that ninety-nine women out of a hundred would do exactly as she was doing, under similar circumstances. Somewhere she had read that no woman ever goes to a man to ask a favor without trying to look her prettiest—without, in truth, bringing all the powers of sex attraction to her aid. Even at her immature

age she had come to the conclusion that beauty rarely fails to win, with scarcely an effort, the prizes for which homeliness, however worthy, strives in vain. Only the day before she had seen, in a magazine, an article about a beautiful Parisian woman, daughter of a dairyman, whose soulful eyes and exquisite complexion had made her rich and famous, the companion of artists, writers and statesmen, the wife of a millionaire. She thought of this while she was dressing and wondered if she, too, possessed the divine fire.

She put on the grey dress. It was the first time she had worn it during the day, but she felt that the occasion justified it. She spent much time over her hair, arranging it with elaborate care. She put just the least bit of a shadowy line under her eyes and added a deeper tone to her naturally well-penciled eyebrows. She manicured her nails carefully and dashed a bit of violet powder inside her waist. When she left the house she was serene in that sense of security which always attends a woman when she knows that she is looking her best.

She walked to the store rapidly and, by chance, met no one she knew; the streets were deserted on this hot July afternoon. It was half-past four when she reached the building and asked a floorwalker to direct her to Mr. Borden's private office.

It was one flight up, in a sort of annex, over the engine-room, and she flew up the stairs, unwilling to wait for the slow-moving elevator. A young woman stenographer, writing letters in an ante-room, inquired her business with crisp formality. Emmy gasped, breathlessly, that she wished to see Mr. Borden on a personal matter.

"What name, please?" inquired the girl, regarding Emmy's flushed cheeks with cool disfavor. It was quite

evident that she believed them painted; it is difficult for one member of the sex to regard a high color in another member of it with equanimity.

"Miss—Miss Moran," stammered Emmy. The girl disappeared. In a few moments she returned. "Mr. Borden will see you presently," she announced, and went on with her work.

There was a large easy-chair near by, and Emmy sank into it and began to fan herself with a ladies' fashion magazine she took from a wicker table. It was a full ten minutes before the girl rose, in response to the buzzing of an electric announcer, and informed her that Mr. Borden was at liberty. In that time Emmy had cooled off and had recovered both her breath and her courage.

The great man sat in a revolving chair, behind a large mahogany desk, which was covered with neatly arranged piles of papers. The room contained beside the desk one or two other chairs, a leather-covered couch and a small filing-case.

Emmy took a step forward, as the girl went out, closing the door behind her. As she did so Mr. Borden looked up from the papers before him, then rose. He wore a suit of linen crash, and, in his light-blue silk shirt and hose, his natty tie, appeared particularly cool and serene—also attractive, Emmy thought, instinctively taking in the details of his costume.

"Oh!—Miss Moran," he remarked, a bit uncertainly, as though not quite sure of her identity. "What can I do for you?"

She took another step forward, svelte, beautiful, radiating charm, the anxious expression of her eyes but adding a pathetic note to her beauty. Mr. Borden thought that he had seldom seen a more attractive woman.

"I—I came about my bill!" she cried. "It's eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents, and I—I can't pay it." She sank into a chair opposite him and leaned her arms on the desk, her eyes turned up to his, appealingly.

"Your bill?" he inquired, wondering. "I'm afraid I don't just understand."

She explained the circumstances. She told him how she had come to make the bill in the first place. There was a catch in her voice which betokened the nearness of tears.

"But—your father?" Borden asked, kindly.

"Oh—he—he would kill me if he knew. I don't know what to do—I don't dare tell him, and your collector came to-day and said I must pay it at once, or——" she bent her head on her arms and began to sob, softly.

Mr. Borden stepped around to the other side of the desk and put his hand on her arm. "There—there," he said, gently, with a man's horror of tears. "Don't cry. We'll find a way out of it, somehow. Eighty-seven fifty, you say?"

Emmy rose, facing him, and clutched instinctively at his hand—his arm. She was like some helpless child, clinging to him for assistance, and in some way it raised up in Mr. Borden's breast a deep desire to help this beautiful and unhappy girl. The pressure of her hand thrilled him. The appeal of her eyes made him eager to serve her. The beauty of her whole being made him long to clasp her in his arms. Women were his delight—new women, different women. Each gave him a new experience in life.

"Yes," he heard her saying, "it was for this suit—and hat, and shoes, and—and some other things." She

blushed prettily. Mr. Borden's gaze seemed to go right through the grey suit and leave her naked.

"Pretty things, too," he remarked, with kindling eye, and looked her up and down. "And very becoming—very." He was made conscious of the fact that he still held her hand by her efforts to draw it away.

"Oh—Mr. Borden—I'll work—I'll save—I'll do anything you say—anything—only my father must not know."

"Anything?" he inquired, moistening his lips.

"Yes," she faltered, and hung her head.

"How about giving me a kiss?" he asked suddenly, beginning to draw her to him.

Emmy began to feel afraid of him. She could feel his grasp tightening on her arms. She dared not scream. After all, what was a kiss? She looked up at him pathetically. "Oh, Mr. Borden!" she cried, in a faint voice. "Oh, Mr. Borden!"

She saw him glance hastily toward the door, his face flushed with excitement, then he drew her to him and kissed her fiercely, over and over. She did not return his kisses, but hung limp in his arms, wondering at the violence with which he grasped her. It almost hurt her, yet for the moment she did not think of it as unpleasant. A warm glow seemed to diffuse itself throughout her brain—he almost lifted her from the floor, and then—there came a tap at the door.

Mr. Borden released her hastily and threw her a gratified look as she turned and gazed nonchalantly out of the window, apparently deeply interested in the unloading of a coal wagon in the areaway. He hurriedly passed his hand over his brow, seated himself at the desk and called: "Come in!"

"Don't ever come here again, do you hear?" His voice was hoarse and almost resentful.

[redacted]

It was the girl, with a telegram. He tore it open hastily. "No answer," he exclaimed with elaborate carelessness, and the girl withdrew.

Emmy turned and looked at him. He was breathing heavily and tapping on the desk with a lead pencil. "What did you come here for?" he growled, not looking at her.

"Why, about the—the bill." Her voice carried a faint suggestion of surprise.

"Damn the bill!" He rose again and taking a roll of money from his pocket tore off a yellow-backed note and thrust it into her hand. "Take that and pay it."

"You—you really mean it?" she cried, looking down at the note as it lay, yellow and crisp, in her hand.

"Yes. And don't ever come here again, do you hear?" His voice was hoarse and almost resentful.

"Oh, Mr. Borden, you are so kind! How can I ever thank you!" She placed the bill carefully in her purse, and, coming up to him, held out her hands, her eyes fixed on his like two pools of liquid jade.

Jim Borden looked at her narrowly. He seemed unable to make up his mind whether this girl was really simple, ingenuous, full of the joy of youth, or crafty and calculating, a clever actress, like so many women he had known. The problem interested him, but he ignored her outstretched hands. Almost he seemed afraid of them. "Hell!" he muttered softly to himself, and thrusting his hands into his pockets strode over to the window and looked out. There was silence in the room, except for the faint clicking of typewriter that came from without.

"Mr. Borden," said Emmy, slowly. "You have been very good to me. I shall never forget what you have done —never. Some day, when I am able, I promise I will repay you——"

He turned toward her. "I'll hold you to that promise," he said, quickly.

"I hope you will," she said, her voice soft and tender—her eyes full of meaning.

Borden's cheerfulness returned with a rush. "Sort of casting my bread on the waters," he laughed. "Why don't you take a run down to New York some time. I'll show you the sights," he laughed.

"I'd love to," she rejoined, archly. "Good-by!" and turned to the door.

"Good-by!" Borden did not take his eyes from her as she passed out.

That night, Jim Borden took the midnight train for New York. As it passed through the long cut and blew for the crossing at Division Street, Emmy was just writing the following sentence in her diary:

"If Mr. Borden were fifteen years younger, or fifteen years older, I believe I could make him marry me."

CHAPTER V

The month of August was excessively hot, and weary humanity began to feel the strain of the long summer. Emmy continued to make lingerie, and went nowhere. A great determination had begun to take form in her mind. The affair with Jim Borden had lent fuel to the flames. Here was a man, rich, experienced, handsome, who had given her a hundred dollars just because she had let him kiss her. She knew why Jim Borden had not attempted to follow up his acquaintance with her. Instinctively she realized the man's fear of compromising himself in the eyes of his fellow-townsmen. Had he met her in New York, in Chicago, she felt quite sure he would have used every effort to give to the matter a different termination. She, on her part, began to realize her power—she knew she held within herself the ability to attract men, and she determined, quite cold-bloodedly, to devote that ability to one end—the securing of a rich husband. In spite of her unusual charm, there was not in the girl much of love in a greater sense, or, if it existed, it was subordinated to her deep-rooted ambition. Of romance she possessed little, unless it were the romance which surrounds the rich, the cultivated, the aristocratic. Her day-dreams invariably led her to marble mansions, cool, rich interiors peopled with many silent-footed servants. Therein she wandered, clad in costly raiment, admired by men, envied by women, removed by infinite distances from all suggestion of the sordid, the commonplace, the mean.

Books still continued to be her constant companions, but her greatest delight were the Sunday newspapers. She was never tired of reading their gaudy supplements embellished with photographs of this, that or the other celebrity—usually some women, famous or notorious, as the case might be, but in either event much in the public eye. Noted actresses who had risen in an incredibly short time from the chorus to the dizzy heights of stardom, society leaders just divorced for the second or third time, opera singers of questionable morals but undoubted talents, famous dancers, stenographers who married their millionaire employers, young American girls selling themselves to worn-out but titled rakes for the sake of un-American coronets, all paraded before her weekly in their amazing pulchritude, proclaiming to the world the fact that women with physical charm need set no boundaries to their ambitions. Throughout it all there ran a strange vein of immorality. Honor, ephemeral though it might be, was given to the dishonorable. Beauty, brazen effrontery, immodesty, were accorded praise that mere virtue seemed to be denied. Four members of the English aristocracy, she read, had married chorus girls. The president of an enormous corporation had put aside his wife and children to marry a musical comedy star. Society women divorced under the most scandalous circumstances seemed in no wise to suffer in the public estimation. Money—money—money—it fairly jingled in her ears; with it, all things seemed possible—without it—one might as well be dead and have done with it. New York, to her, typified the world. The picture of it which these papers presented seemed a true picture. She saw a foreign actress, far-famed for her spectacular career, notoriously immoral, feted at the home of one of

Gainesville's leading citizens, whose doors she, Emmy, with all her virtue, might not pass. More and more she determined to have money.

Hence, she sewed, and dreamed, and waited for opportunity to knock. Some age-old wisdom within her shapely head told her that James Borden did not spell opportunity —at least not of the sort she desired.

Her mother was at this time comparatively happy. Each afternoon she spent with Katie, after the work of the day had been done at home, helping the bride to build her little nest. There were curtains to be made and hung, table linen to be hemmed and initialed, floors to be stained, a hundred and one little details of housekeeping to be arranged, in all of which Mrs. Moran lived over her own honeymoon days, and realized the joys of building anew, on another foundation, the structure which, in her own case, had come to so poor a completion. After all, it is the greatest privilege of motherhood.

Emmy did not spend much time with Katie. She felt, somehow, that Katie disapproved of her. The latter, since her marriage, had become suddenly very strict in her ideas. Every word—every action—every thought, almost, she submitted to the one test—"Will Harvey like it?" Harvey did not like Emmy over much. So she let the Cook family severely alone and went on with her reading and her sewing.

It was about the middle of the month that Mr. Moran, in his efforts to forget the fact that the thermometer had been above 90 for nearly two weeks, began to spend more and more time in Rullman's saloon, cooling off. Sometimes he did not come home to the mid-day meal at all, contenting himself with a sandwich, washed down by innumerable glasses of beer. One afternoon, amid a great

commotion, he was brought home from the factory, unconscious. He had been overcome by the heat, the doctor said, and ordered ice baths. The ice baths were quite useless. Before the first one had been so much as prepared, Mr. Moran was numbered with his fathers.

Mrs. Moran wept continuously for two weeks, and spent the time between fits of sobbing in recounting the deceased's good points to all her friends. These received her pæans of praise in decorous silence, or with expressions of sympathy, and hurried off to tell each other how happy Mrs. Moran ought to be, now that she had been providentially rid of "that old Jim Moran." Emmy was dry-eyed. Her father had sounded within her no depths of affection from which tears might spring, and she was not hypocritical enough to pretend to them. The presence of death, it is true, depressed her, but it was a quite impersonal feeling, common to all humanity when they approach the valley of the shadow.

It transpired, after Mr. Moran's somewhat muddled affairs had been brought into order, that with the exception of a life insurance policy of twenty-five hundred dollars, he had left no estate. This money, coming to the widow, was all that stood between her and starvation. Mrs. Moran was much perturbed as to the best way to invest it, and asked every one she met for an opinion on the subject. Needless to say, she was deluged with advice, running all the way from guaranteed seven per cent. gold bonds of the Lone Jack Copper Mining and Refining Company, shares 10 cents each, to stock in a patent device for making a non-refillable bottle, controlled by the prescription clerk at the local drug store. In the course of her search for advice she naturally asked Emmy, not because she thought the latter knew anything about such

matters, but because it was characteristic of Mrs. Moran to ask advice from every one on every subject which entered into the affairs of her life, from whether she should drink one cup of coffee or two at breakfast, to the best recipe for making lemon pies.

Emmy surprised her mother by having very definite ideas on the subject of the use of her father's fortune. "Why not invest it in *me*?" she said, with a cool, level glance, indicative of much inward thought.

"Invest it in you?" Mrs. Moran appeared startled, as she always did when a new idea was presented to her rather tenuous mind. "Why, child, what do you mean?"

Emmy looked at herself in the glass. "Mother," she remarked, quite casually, "don't you think I'm rather attractive?"

"Why—I—of course I do. What on earth has that to do with it?"

"Then why not back me with this money. We'll give up the house here, leave Gainesville and go to New York. Give me a year there and some decent clothes and I'll marry somebody with real money. Then you'll get your twenty-five hundred back and a lot more besides."

The idea was too much for the older woman to grasp all at one time. "Nonsense!" she cried, dismissing it as utter folly. "Suppose you shouldn't? Where would we be then?"

"Where will we be, anyway? You can't get over ten dollars a month interest on the money, and nobody could live on that. Anyway, I don't intend to sit around and do nothing. I'm going to study stenography."

"Stenography!"

"Certainly. You know I did once for three months, that time father wouldn't let me go to work. In three

months more I'll be able to take notes and run a typewriter well enough to make a living, but I won't do it here. There isn't any chance in this wretched place. I'm going to New York and I want you to go with me."

Mrs. Moran seemed displeased. "Pretty chance you'll have to marry any one, let alone a rich man, if you start in that way."

"The best chance in the world. Lots of stenographers marry their employers. That's the best way I know to meet men worth while. Suppose I went to New York and didn't work. I might sit around for years and never meet any one, outside of a lot of clerks living at boarding-houses. You'd better do what I say, mother. I'm going to start in at Easton's Business College to-morrow. The three months will cost thirty dollars. You've got to pay it." She went out of the room with a determined look about her mouth which impressed Mrs. Moran more than her words had done.

The next three months were busy ones for them both. Mrs. Moran, at home, wailed through the days, her soul torn to shreds by the necessity of breaking up what had for twenty years been her home. Her household goods, except such treasured pieces as were donated, *pro tem.*, to Katie, were all to go to the auction-rooms. Emmy, at the business college, toiled early and late and added to her daily task by hiring a typewriter and practicing at home until the small hours of the morning. She threw into the work all the concentrated energy and enthusiasm of her youth. In three months, with the start she already had, she made the progress of a year and proved her efficiency to her mother by arranging a demonstration, during which she took down the first chapter of Genesis as fast as Mrs. Moran could read it off. The latter was amazed.

Emmy was coolly confident. "Now we are going to New York," she announced.

Several times, during these months, Emmy met Jim Borden on the street, but, with the exception of a single occasion, he did not speak to her other than to wish her good-day in passing. The occasion of his stopping was immediately after her father's death, when he paused to express his sympathy. Emmy told him that she intended to go to New York in a short time. Borden appeared delighted. "Send me your address," he said, "when you get located and when I come to town I'll show you the sights, as I promised—and I'll hold you to *your* promise, too," he observed, significantly. "You owe me something, you know."

Emmy received his advances laughingly, but inwardly determined that it would be some time before she sent Mr. Borden her address. She was not ready to repay him for his kindness, in dollars and cents, and she by no means intended to do so in any other form. Borden had been associating too long with women who held themselves cheaply, she thought.

Good, honest Katie felt that her mother was making a frightful mistake. She and Harvey wanted Mrs. Moran to buy their little home, take them as boarders, along with Emmy, who would go to work, and thus, by concentrating their resources, all live decently and happily. Emmy objected; the argument almost led to a family row, when Harvey accused his sister-in-law of being selfish. In the end, however, Emmy's wishes prevailed—she was the strongest nature of the four, although the others did not realize it. On the night before they left Gainesville, Emmy entered a sort of farewell to the place in her diary. "I feel like a butterfly leaving its cocoon," she

wrote. "Why fish for minnows in a puddle when the ocean is so near? It may be stormy, but I'm going to try it. Good-by, sleepy old town; I hope I shall never see you again."

They departed the next morning, leaving Katie, tearful, on the platform. Emmy's mourning suit was very stylish and becoming. Mrs. Moran was enveloped in grief and an impenetrable black veil.

CHAPTER VI

When Emmy and her mother arrived in New York they went to a small boarding-house on East Twenty-fourth Street, recommended to them by some friends who had spent several weeks there while visiting the city. It was a quiet, old-fashioned house, with an atmosphere of dignity about it which even the little white slip of paper, with the words "Rooms and Board," pasted on the casing of the doorway, could not entirely destroy.

The place was like most of its kind. It was steeped in an unmistakable and characteristic odor, composed apparently of equal parts of soap, cooking and escaping gas, with a sub-flavor of mould. The dining-room in the basement held one large table and three smaller ones, all waited on by a huge and militant-looking colored girl, black as Erebus.

Here there gathered, at meal-times, a middle-aged couple, who sat through their meals in stony and aggrieved silence, as though reproaching the world for its levity; an elderly clerk in a nearby department store; a widow, who treasured her grief as apparently her sole earthly possession; a musician, who talked shop incessantly; a young woman, with glasses, who taught school; a mysterious man, with dark mustaches, who never spoke of his business at all, and whom his fellow-boarders had decided among themselves to be a desperate character (he was, in reality, a salesman of ladies' underwear); and a young newspaper man, who cocked an approving eye at

Emmy, sitting next to him, and made conversation about the weather and the butter.

This young man was, in a way, the star boarder, since he occupied the parlor and adjoining alcove bedroom on the ground floor. The parlor he called his studio, and Emmy and her mother had not been in the house a week before he invited them, one Sunday morning, to visit it.

Emmy had arrived in the city on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, in order that no time might be lost, she had copied from a daily paper a long list of advertisers desiring stenographers, and had started out to call on them.

Her unfamiliarity with the town made it slow work at first, and the lack of progress she made rather discouraged her. It was her intention, if possible, to secure a position with some large and prominent house, or at least with a firm whose business, judging from its surroundings, was a prosperous one. Such houses, however, did not, it seemed, advertise for stenographers. Those offices to which she went were mostly small, insignificant-looking places in second-rate buildings. One housed a theatrical man, whose sole stock-in-trade appeared to be a battered typewriter and a huge stack of photographs of stage celebrities. He told Emmy he was a press agent, and invited her to go to a show. Another proved to be a small hardware store, the proprietor of which wanted her to wait on customers while not busy at her machine. Still another was the office of an insurance company, where scores of girls were employed on routine work in a huge room, and the clatter of machines was deafening. At almost all the places she was asked for references, and when she said she had had no previous experience her questioners seemed to lose interest in her. She had counted on her personal charm to assist her, but most of the men she saw

were apparently too busy to notice whether she was tall or short, black or white. Those who did, made eyes at her and invited her to lunch, or dinner. One young fellow, in a small office on the top floor of a downtown skyscraper, on whose door appeared only the legend, "Timber Lands," promptly asked her to marry him and thus save needless expense on both their parts. Two could live as cheaply as one, he explained, and he would save the expense of employing a typewriter. Emmy declined, with thanks. Breaking into the life of this great city did not seem as easy as she had supposed. By Saturday night she was thoroughly tired out and a trifle discouraged.

She did not confine her search for a position entirely to those advertisers who wanted stenographers. While looking over the daily papers she saw many other notices of various sorts offering employment to women. Some of them she did not understand; others appeared to offer opportunities to make a living which she felt it might be worth her while to investigate. After all, she reasoned, it made little difference to her just what sort of work she did, provided it carried with it the chance to meet worth-while men; she could always go back to her typewriting if she were not pleased. One day, toward the end of the week, she cut out several of these advertisements and went to the addresses given in them.

She at once found a difference in the reception accorded her. During the earlier days of the week she had been offering for sale solely her abilities as a worker—a stenographer—and had, in most cases, been met, somewhat to her chagrin, on that basis. On this day she found that she had entered a new market, a market in which women competed on a physical basis. She had thought that the field seemed overcrowded, where even the slight

measure of training necessary to operate a typewriting machine was the only requirement. Now she found that the number of such women was small indeed, compared with that of the women who had nothing to offer but themselves. It amazed her to realize how many utterly untrained women were in search of work. At the very first place to which she went, the office of a manufacturer of women's suits, she found so large a crowd of girls ahead of her that she could not summon up courage enough to join their jostling and turbulent ranks. There must have been nearly a hundred of them, pushing and crowding to be the first to enter. And it disconcerted her somewhat to find that a very great many of these women were almost, if not quite, as good looking as herself. The pay named in the advertisement—twenty dollars a week—had attracted her, as well as the fact that she had read of cloak and suit models who had married well. She had thought that her face, her figure, would give her a distinct advantage in those lines of employment in which good looks alone were paid for; it came as something of a shock to find that physical attractiveness was both plentiful and cheap, that there seemed to be a hundred women with nothing but their good looks to offer in exchange for a living, to one who could offer training of even the most meagre description.

The experience she had at this first place was repeated over and over during the day. One of her addresses proved to be that of a theatrical employment agency. Emmy did not know this until she arrived, whereupon she determined to wait and see what she was offered. The stage was by no means a bad place for showing off one's wares.

Here, also, she found a crowd of young women that

jammed the dingy little outer office and overflowed into the hall. It was over two hours before she at last found herself in the agent's sanctum. He was a small, dark, greasy-looking little man, and he eyed her covetously, asked her weight, felt her arms as he might have felt the legs of a horse, and offered her a position in the chorus of a traveling burlesque show.

"You're solid," he said appreciatively, "right weight and age, and a bear for looks. We're advertising 'twenty hot young birds—you provide the cold bottle.' Pretty good tag, eh? Sixteen a week. Tights, of course, and you double for the living pictures. Go out in two weeks. What do you say?"

Emmy said she would consider it and let him know. She escaped into Broadway, regretting her wasted hours. She knew the sort of men that patronize burlesque shows.

Another address led her to the box office of a theatre. A girl was wanted to take charge of the men's coatroom. "What we want," a young man explained to her, "is a girl who can put up a good front—one that all the men will say is a pippin. No salary, of course—you get your tips. Big money in it, if you're wise to your job. You know how it is with these guys. They'll be wanting to hand you a line of hot air. You've got to come back at 'em with the quick stuff. If they see you're a live one they'll stake you to a quarter, and some of 'em are likely to ask you out to supper. The last girl we had got a swell guy on the string, and I hear he's putting up big for her. Great chance, if you work it right."

Emmy did not take this position, in spite of the advantages which the young man pointed out. She walked down to Fourteenth Street, in response to an advertisement which said "Easy work and good pay for young

woman with good figure." She found herself at the office of a firm engaged in the manufacture of women's underwear. They wanted a girl to pose, in combination suits, for photographs to be used in advertising their goods. It was a temporary position only, and Emmy saw nothing in it for her.

The last place she visited was a store on Twenty-third Street, where a young woman was wanted to "demonstrate" a new kind of corset. Applicants had been requested to call between four and five o'clock. The pay was large—two dollars a day. She found at least thirty girls waiting in a small office, and their number was being steadily augmented. Emmy got into conversation with one of them, a very attractive girl, with red hair. She told Emmy that "demonstrating" consisted, in this case, in posing for several hours a day in her underclothes, putting on and taking off corsets of different sorts, to show the superiority of the particular one she was to advertise. Emmy became quite interested in this woman's talk. She spoke plainly, and somewhat bitterly.

"Yes," she said, in answer to a remark from Emmy. "I've done pretty much everything. You see, my husband died four years ago—he was a clerk in a big office downtown—and ever since then I've been up against it. Wouldn't care so much for myself, but there's the kid. It's a tough game, believe me, if you don't know how to do something besides just look pretty. My sister's a trained nurse, and makes twenty-five a week. Wish I was in her shoes. And I know a girl that took up designing, and makes fifty. I'm just a dub, I guess. Haven't got anything to offer but my shape."

"I understand cloak models get pretty good pay," said Emmy.

"Yes. I tried it for six months. It's all a question of how far you're willing to go. I've lost two or three good jobs on account of being particular. I suppose I'd take a chance, same as most, if it weren't for the kid; but I got to think of her. I handled that cloak model job pretty well for quite a while. Jollied the buyers along, and drew the line at anything more than dinner and the theatre, but when the boss's son got after me I knew it was all up. I didn't last more'n a week after that. Same way in stores and on the stage. I slapped a stage manager's face once, for getting fresh. Glad I did, too, though it cost me my job. He was a dirty dog. Believe me, kiddo, if you can pound a typewriter, as you say you can, you're wasting your time here. Wish I could. You won't get quite as much money, perhaps, but you'll last longer, unless, of course, you're ready to play the game the way it's played here in New York, and go the limit. You'll get along, I guess," she said, looking Emmy up and down, "with your looks. But just figure for yourself what chance a homely girl, who doesn't know how to do anything, has got in this game. I'd sooner be dead, believe me."

Emmy did not wait to put in an application for the position as demonstrator. She went home, and cut out another lot of advertisements for stenographers from the afternoon papers. The experiences of the day had shown her that even the little training she possessed gave her an enormous advantage over the woman who had none. It seemed to her that there was something unfair in the way things were arranged. There were just as many women in the world as men, yet although the latter were all, or nearly all, sent out into the world knowing how to do something whereby they might earn a living; women, as

a class, could live only by attaching themselves, like a barnacle, to some man. She liked the simile—and told it to her mother. Mrs. Moran smiled her usual patient smile. "You have such strange ideas, Emmy," she said. "Marriage is a sacred thing. You ought not to joke about it. When the right man comes along you'll think very differently." Emmy thought it likely that she would, and went on reading her paper. Since conditions, as she found them, made marriage a woman's chief profession, she felt that she might as well pursue it with something more in mind than board and lodging. The dread of poverty, always strong within her, had been intensified by her experiences since her arrival in New York. In this city, she very soon found out, there was no room for the incompetent. Competition was too keen. Those who came into the market place must come with something of value to sell. If they could offer but a fresh young body and a pretty face, the price they could demand apparently varied in proportion to their necessities. If confronted with starvation, Emmy knew that her price would not vary greatly from that of any other marketable flesh—a few cents a pound, perhaps. If she could, by supporting herself, fix her own price, she knew that even millions were not an impossibility. The thought of the life insurance money in the bank reassured her. She reflected that she had that much to thank her father for, in any event.

Mrs. Moran could not understand why Emmy had grown so hard in her outlook upon life. "When I say that a woman should look forward to marriage, Emmy, as her duty in life, I do not mean that she should regard it as a means of making a living. There is the question of love to be considered. You seem always to forget that. If a

man loves you it is perfectly right that he should support you. It is his duty."

"Exactly," Emmy said, with a mischievous smile. "And if the man who loves me, and has to support me, has a million or two, so much the better, don't you think?"

"Why—yes—I suppose so. But you should not let that be the chief consideration. You should consider a man's character, and his—his honesty."

"I know, mother, but a man with money is just as likely to be honest as one without, isn't he? Just because I'm practical you say I'm hard. I'm not at all. I believe in love just as much as you do; I mean to have it, too; and it seems to me that if a man with a lot of money offers to marry a poor girl like me, it's the best evidence in the world that he loves her. Don't you think so?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Moran, confused by the girl's sophistry. "But you might not love him."

"I probably would before I got through. I've read that they never do, in France, till after marriage, but it seems to work very well.

Mrs. Moran had nothing to say to this argument. She was greatly worried about Emmy. All that she could do was to pray. She did that unceasingly, far into the night, when Emmy lay beside her, sleeping the untroubled sleep of youth.

The week ended with Emmy no nearer her goal than she had been when it began. The discouragement that she felt arose from the impatience of inexperience. It was this that caused her to write in her diary that Saturday night:

"There's not a man in this house worth knowing, except the newspaper reporter who sits next to me. I think I

shall have a talk with him. He said last night that my eyes always made him think of a woman he met in Morocco last year. An Ouled Nail, he said she was, or something of the sort. I wonder what he meant. He might be able to find me a position. If I don't get something soon I believe I'll write to Mr. Borden, and send him my address. I wonder if I *could* make him marry me if I tried?"

It was the following morning that Mr. Norton, the newspaper reporter, invited Emmy and her mother to inspect his studio. He came in to breakfast very late, and seemed strangely nervous and out of sorts. Emmy also was breakfasting late; with the exception of her mother, they had the dining-room to themselves. Mr. Norton swallowed two huge cups of coffee, played with an egg, and crumbled a piece of toast to shreds without eating a morsel. Then he jerked out his cigarette-case, rose impatiently and suggested that they come and see his rooms.

Mrs. Moran said nothing, but glanced at Emmy. Emmy said "Yes," and followed Mr. Norton up the stairs. In a moment he was ushering them into his studio.

The place looked as though it had never been put in order since the beginning of time. The walls were literally plastered with lithographs, posters, and sketches in black and white and color, many of them originals. The floor, except the central portion of it, was heaped with similar sketches, books, newspapers, magazines and clothes in a confused and impossibly inextricable mass. Photographs of every conceivable subject, from aeroplane ascensions to musical comedy choruses, were stacked about, on the marble mantel, on the table, along the walls. A typewriter stood near the bed, on a chair. Beside it, on the floor, lay a pile of manuscript. A broken revolver, souvenir of

a sensational murder case, hung from the chandelier along with a pink satin slipper and a mummified Indian head from New Mexico, its long, black hair serving as a means of suspension. On the mantel stood a nearly empty whisky bottle and several empty beer bottles, which spoke eloquently to Emmy of the noisy party which had disturbed her slumbers in the small hours of the morning. Norton lit his cigarette and began to inhale it in huge puffs.

The girl gazed about the room with interest. Here, she felt, was the beginning of all things for her. It was an intuition she could not explain, even to herself. Her mother looked mild disapproval. The place outraged her inherent sense of order.

Mr. Norton was a gay little fellow, somewhat below medium height, with much brown, wavy hair which seemed in imminent danger of falling into his bright, roving eyes. His mouth was large and humorous, his manner quick and nervous. He bounced about the room like a flea, seemingly unable to remain quiet for a moment. As he carefully explained to Mrs. Moran, he had "the jumps," which, he informed her, resulted from too many highballs the night before. "It's a choice of two evils," he laughed, gaily. "If I don't drink I feel like a fool—if I do, I act like one." He hopped over to the table and began to show Emmy the pictures.

The girl felt herself in a new world. She, who had so often spent a whole morning absorbed in the contents of some New York Sunday paper, now found herself in the sanctum, so to speak, of one of those enviable beings who created them. "What do you write mostly, Mr. Norton?" she asked, in tones of deep respect.

Norton struck an attitude. "Behold," he said, with a profound salaam, "Dorothy Dorr!"

"Dorothy Dorr?" Emmy looked at him in amazement. "You mean the young woman who writes the heart-to-heart talks on married life in the *Courier?*"

"The same," he grinned.

"But her photograph? I've seen it in the paper lots of times."

"Oh, that's a fake. Friend of mine—in the "Jolly Widow" chorus. Lent me her photo. Good-looker, isn't she?"

Emmy seemed disappointed, and Norton was quick to notice it. "Besides that punk," he remarked, earnestly, "I do all the big murder trials. You may have read the stories of the Leland case in the *Courier* this week. I wrote them. Say, that Leland girl is a wonder. I've got to know her pretty well this past month and I must say she's got any woman I ever saw beat to a pulp for nerve."

Through Emmy's mind flashed the tale of a young girl accused of murdering her elderly husband of a year to get possession of his large property. The sensational newspapers had been filled with her pictures in every conceivable attitude, with stories of her past, her beauty, her youth, her talents, her likes and dislikes, the cost of her hats, the kind of flowers she preferred, her pet poodle, her clothes, and the way she wore her hair.

"She must be a horrid creature," Emmy observed, with the innate jealousy of one beautiful woman for another.

"Not on your life! She's a wonder. Most beautiful eyes I've ever seen. Coarse work, though, giving the old guy rat poison. Very coarse." He took up a portrait of the woman from the table and handed it to Emmy. "Just look at her eyes. Aren't they wonderful?"

Emmy handed the picture back after examining it carefully, without comment. As Norton replaced it on the table another photograph fell to the floor. The girl caught it as it fell. It represented a young man of perhaps thirty-two years of age, with a strong, earnest face, handsome features and a whimsical smile. She glanced at Mr. Norton, questioningly, as she returned the picture to him.

"Oh, that's Chanler," he said, glancing down at it. "Grant Chanler. Short-story writer—novelist—maybe you know his stuff?"

"No," Emmy replied. "I don't remember ever having read any of it."

"He writes quite a lot—for the *Universal* and the *Post*, mostly. Published "The Polygamist" last year—strong novel, too—but didn't sell. Too strong, I guess. Great friend of mine. I'll introduce him to you some time."

"Thank you. I'd like to meet him."

"How long do you expect to be in New York?" Norton inquired as he dumped the contents of two chairs on the floor to provide his guests with seats. He himself sat on the edge of the table, smoking his cigarette as though life itself depended upon it.

"I—I expect to live here. You see, I'm looking for work."

"Work?"

"Yes. I'm a—a stenographer. I want a position where I can make a living."

Norton glanced at her with added interest. "Phew!" he whistled. "Why didn't you tell me? I'd have spoken to Chanler about it. He was here last night. You see," he explained, "he's looking for some one to take dictation —stories and a new novel he's just beginning I found

out all my copy myself"—he jerked his hand toward the typewriter on the chair—"but Chanler won't bother with it. Says it cramps his style. I don't know whether he's got anybody yet or not. He didn't have last night. I'll ask him." He looked at his watch. "Tell you what we'll do. I'm free to-night. I'll get hold of him and we'll all take dinner together." He looked at Mrs. Moran. "Is it all right, Mrs. Moran? I'll take good care of her."

"If Emmy thinks——" began Mrs. Moran, weakly.

"I'll be glad to go. It's very kind of you to ask me, Mr. Norton." She flashed a gratified glance at him, which made even that seasoned young man's head swim for the fraction of a second.

"We'll go from here together—about six. I'll tell Chanler to meet us at the restaurant. Colatti's. That'll suit him—his place is right near there. Tenth Street. You'll be ready at six, Miss Moran?" He fished his hat out of a mass of objects on the foot of the bed. "Got to beat it now. Engagement at twelve. Sorry." He held open the door as Emmy and her mother passed into the hall. "See you later." With a bright smile, he dashed out and a moment later they heard him clatter noisily down the front steps.

Mrs. Moran at once began to discuss the propriety of allowing Emmy to go out alone with two men whom she scarcely knew, but the latter paid but scant attention. "It's business, mother," she said, shortly. "It may get me a position. If I'm going to be a business woman I've got to learn to take care of myself. That Mr. Chanler is awfully good-looking, isn't he?"

Colatti's restaurant is a survival of the New York of 1890, when the Chat Noir, on South Fifth Avenue, with its fifty-cent *table d'hôte*, including wine, and Maria's, on

Twelfth Street, famous for its Italian cooking, were regarded as centres of Bohemia, and were accordingly patronized extensively by young and budding artists and writers. Alas! Their day is no more. The Chat Noir, a dismal, deserted shell, no longer echoes with care-free laughter. Only its solemn black cat, with the yellow eyes, remains to look mournfully out on a dirty street given over to the ways of commerce. Maria's, with its Friday nights, its card game in the back room, is now a modern apartment house. The budding artists and authors live in large apartment hotels and eat at expensive restaurants. In New York, even Bohemia has become too prosperous to dine at fifty-cent *table d'hôtes*.

Here and there are a few survivors that struggle along at seventy-five cents, with wine—of a sort, but ribbon-counter clerks and desperate Bohemians from the suburbs are their chief patrons.

The place was crowded as Emmy and Norton entered the hallway, but the diners made merry, consciously—heavily, as though they felt it was expected of them—not because of any inward lightness of heart. To Emmy, however, it all seemed very gay—very enticing. She looked about and drew a deep breath. "So this is Bohemia?" she asked, smiling.

Norton gave a short laugh. "Bohemia isn't a place," he said, "it's an attitude. I come here because it's cheap. The food's rotten, but the music—there's a woman here who sings—really sings—and that makes one forget how thin the soup is." He looked about. "Chanler isn't here yet," then turned as a tall man, whom Emmy at once recognized as the original of the photograph she had seen that morning, clapped him on the back. "Hello, Charlie!" he said. "Guess I'm late."

Norton looked up. "Why, hello, little one!" he said. "Glad to see you," then turned to Emmy. "Miss Moran, let me present Mr. Grant Chanler, America's foremost catch-as-catch-can novelist. One of our best little authors."

Emmy murmured her pleasure and shook Chanler's extended hand. "Miss Moran is seeing Bohemia for the first time, personally conducted by yours truly," went on Norton. "On the right we see Harold Handycash, the famous tonsorial artist, feeding his face with filet of sole a la codfish. On the left——"

Chanler put a stop to his nonsense. "Better get a table, Charlie; there's quite a crowd here to-night."

Norton went up to an approaching head waiter, who evidently knew him. He held up three fingers. The waiter nodded and bowed. "This way," he said, and started toward the rear of the room, followed by the others. Emmy was conscious only of a confused babel of talk, a rattling of dishes, a smell of strange cooking, and, above all, the blare of a diminutive orchestra and piano, playing, with crashing effect, the sextette from "Lucia di Lammermoor." It all seemed very new and wonderful to her—Chanler, behind her, touched her arm and guided her safely between the close-set tables. Many of the men looked up at her in undisguised admiration as she passed; the trim black suit set off her fine figure, her exquisite face, to wonderful advantage. The women looked at Chanler, their eyes flashing wireless messages.

Grant Chanler was tall and thin, with the thinness of sinew and muscle. His face, in spite of its dark coloring, seemed careworn—there were lines upon it that bespoke much suffering—unrest—the scars accorded by circumstance to ambition. His eyes Emmy thought the tiredest

eyes she had ever seen—somehow they made her feel a great sympathy for the man—a desire to help, to comfort him, rose in her heart. Norton had told her something of Chanler's life as they came along—how he had begun as a business man, in obedience to his father's wishes, and had later taken up writing and gradually fought his way, during eight bitter years, to a position of at least comparative success in the literary world. He no longer dreaded the advent of his board bill, nor cooked his own meals in a chilly hall bedroom, but for what little way he had won along the road to fame and fortune he had paid a heavy price.

"It must be wonderful to live in New York and write, Mr. Chanler," Emmy ventured, timidly, after they had been seated. "I should think you would be very happy."

Chanler smiled at her—a rather weary smile. "The writing game," he said, slowly, "is hard and full of disappointments. Naturally, I love it, or I should not do it, but I sometimes wonder whether success is worth the cost." He passed his hand over his eyes.

"Have a cocktail, old man. It'll buck you up," laughed Norton, as he signaled the waiter. "Don't pay any attention to him, Miss Moran. He always says that when he's tired. You're working too hard, Grant," he said, earnestly. "Why don't you take a rest?"

"Can't, Charlie. You know that series I'm doing for the *Review*. Five thousand words a week—and it means bread and butter." He turned to Emmy. "You see, Miss Moran, writing is a business nowadays. They measure our work with a yard-stick and pay accordingly."

"Why, I thought all you authors did was just write—when you felt like it, and get thousands of dollars for

your things. I've read about"—she mentioned the names of two or three popular writers.

Norton and Chanler smiled at each other. "Oh, yes, those fellows get big prices now," said the latter, "but they didn't always. They had their lean years, too. And then some of them have struck popular veins—neglected wives, or Jew clothing-makers, or joyous crooks. They work on a formula and the public can't get enough of it. I don't blame them, either. They're clever. It's just what we'd all like to do, if we could, from the money standpoint at least. Of course, any man would rather write what he feels, irrespective of its popularity, if he could, but it isn't business."

"Take Green," said Norton, laughing, as he turned to Emmy. "He's been writing a novel for years—something about the influence of environment on character, I believe. Great stuff, too, but deep—awful deep. To keep going, he does odd jobs. The other day the *Ladies' Companion*, one of those home-and-mother things, got him to do a story called "Why I Never Had Any Children," or something of the sort, signed "A Disappointed Woman." He worked all night on it—they had to have it by two the next day. Got a hundred and fifty for it—and the fond mothers all over the country ate it up. Dozens of letters to the editor and all that. Literature!" He chuckled and drank his cocktail. "Don't I advise love-lorn maidens, at fifty bones per week, what to wear to afternoon teas, or how to answer their best fellow's letter when he writes asking them to go to the Window Dressers' Ball?"

Emmy looked at the two men in wonder. "You don't seem to take it very seriously," she said.

"Chanler does. Look at him," laughed Norton. "I don't. Some day I'm going to get a job writing adver-

tisements for Buster's Baby Food and be a real lit'r'y man, and dine at the Plaza."

"He's the cleverest newspaper man in New York, Miss Moran," said Chanler, in spite of Norton's jeers. "He could write circles around me if he'd only work, but he won't. Nothing short of actual starvation will make him write a line of real stuff, and then he does it under protest." He turned to Norton. "How's the play going, Charlie?"

"Oh, so-so. I've got the second act done.

"But you had that done last winter."

"Oh, well, I've written it over. But I can't seem to get the third, somehow."

Chanler explained to Emmy. "Mr. Norton is writing a play. 'The Circle,' it's called." "Good name, don't you think?" interjected Norton, with a momentary burst of interest, then relapsed into his customary attitude of bantering cynicism. "Guess that's the reason I can't finish it. A circle has no end, you know, or beginning, either, for that matter; that must be why my first act never seems to start off right. I just go round and round and round." He poured out a glass of the thin wine and drank it off.

"It must be wonderful to write plays." Emmy looked at him in admiration.

"The wonderful part is getting them produced—not writing them," laughed Chanler. "Anybody can write a play—it takes a genius to sell one. Eh, Charlie?"

Norton looked glum. "Wortheimer has promised to produce 'The Circle,' " he said, "when it's done."

"Why shouldn't he? He'd promise to produce the Bible if you'd dramatize it, which only means he'll read it when it's finished, or let the office boy read it; that doesn't cost him anything."

"No, that's true. I suppose if I'd ask him to put up any money——"

"He'd fall in a faint, of course. Wortheimer only does rotten plays, anyway. You haven't a turkey trot or a grizzly bear hug in your show, have you?"

"Not yet. I'm thinking about it, though. I guess I'll have the heroine do a Russian shirt dance—without the shirt—something like that ought to get the money, the way New York's going at present. Good Lord! The things they hand out nowadays." He turned to Emmy. "You see, Miss Moran, I've lived in New York all my life, and I've seen it change. Five years ago they'd go right up in the air just at living pictures. To-day—believe me, I'm no saint by a thousand miles, but how they can get away with some of the suggestive stuff they pull on the public beats me. And young girls go and eat it up—as if it were ice cream soda. Of course, you don't know what I mean," he said to Emmy, apologetically. "You see, I forget you're just from the country, so to speak, but it's in the air in this burg. Don't you think so, Grant?"

Chanler smiled. "It's you newspaper people who are responsible for it, Charlie," he said. "You and your sensations. A Paris dance-hall artist, with plenty of curves and no morals, becomes the heroine of a notorious European scandal. You newspaper fellows print her photographs every day and publish articles over her name that she's never written, telling how she bathes in champagne to improve her complexion, and receives her callers in her bathtub. The public have her name hammered into them until she becomes a celebrity. Then some enterprising manager brings her over here, at a thousand a night, to show off her pearls—and the public falls for it and tumbles over itself to pay its money and see the most famous pros-

titute of the hour. Why? Because you've aroused their curiosity, that's all. The woman probably hasn't the least talent for acting, and I could produce a dozen shop girls in an hour that would beat her in the matter of looks. But you've advertised her, and anything will go if it's advertised enough. Take this woman you're writing about now—this Leland girl—a common, hard, sensual little beast, with a pretty face and a baby stare; she murders her husband, a poor old fool she's married for his money. *You* make her a popular heroine. Looks as though she'd get off scot free because they can't prove she bought the poison. Everybody knows she's guilty, and yet her cell isn't big enough to hold the flowers she gets every day. 'The baby bride,' you called her, and a lot of sniveling idiots fall for it. If she *does* get off—with the advertising you've given her—she'll either go on the stage and get a big salary, or marry some idiot who ought to be up at Matteawan. And the modest girl who works for a living—the competent actress who's decent—you don't hear anybody making a fuss over her, do you? Virtue seems to be a drug in the market. Any woman can be virtuous. It takes more than that to get the centre of the stage nowadays." He turned apologetically to Emmy. "You must pardon my plain talk, Miss Moran, but the subject's one I'm thinking about a good deal just at present. I'm trying to get some of it into a novel I'm writing. And that reminds me—Mr. Norton tells me that you're looking for a position as a stenographer."

"Yes. I—I can take dictation pretty well—and I'd like to get a start. If you are willing to try me I'm sure I could give satisfaction."

"I'm sure of it." Chanler bent a gravely approving gaze upon her. "I dictate rather slowly, generally three

or four hours in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon as well. The rest of the time you'd spend in writing off your notes on the machine. I've been using a public stenographer—she's very fast and accurate, but I have to pay her by the hour, and I can't always get her when I want her, and sometimes when I can I don't feel like working, and, in the end, it costs me more than it would to have some one regularly all the time. I'd be willing to pay twelve a week to the right woman." He paused, interrogatively.

Emmy could not repress an exclamation of pleasure. She had not expected to get over ten. "That would be quite satisfactory," she said, simply. "I can come at once, if you wish."

"To-morrow. I'll give you my address." He took a card from his pocket, then paused. "Why shouldn't we all go 'round to my place after dinner—then you will know just how to get there. You can come, Charlie?" he turned to Norton.

"Sure. How's that Kentucky Bourbon holding out?"

"Plenty left. Harrison may run in, too. We'll have a little party."

"You're on." Norton turned to the little stage where the orchestra was just playing the opening notes of Tosti's "Good-Bye." "That Richert woman's going to sing. If she had been a little less virtuous and not quite so fat she'd be singing at the Metropolitan right now."

CHAPTER VII

Chanler's studio was located in a small and not very modern building on Tenth Street. It consisted of a large front room, with a tiny bedroom and bath adjoining. The front room was severely simple in its appointments, but the few things it contained were in excellent taste. Several Oriental rugs lay about the floor, a very large, flat-topped desk, of weathered oak, occupied the middle of the room, a leather-covered settee stood along one wall, while several chairs, a typewriter desk and a small table completed the furnishings.

The walls, in light grey, afforded a pleasing background for a few old prints, one or two etchings and several sketches in oil and water colors. Emmy noticed, as she entered the room, that there were a great many books—along the walls in shelves, on the couch, the table, even the floor. The room impressed her with a sense of dignity and purpose. It was palpably a workroom, with few concessions to comfort.

Chanler showed her about the place, exhibiting his pictures with pardonable pride—they were excellent of their kind and presents to him from the artists—and then disposed her comfortably in an easy-chair. The two men lounged about, smoking and talking shop. Norton wanted to hear about the new novel—he always took a deeper interest in the work of other men than he did in his own. Emmy sat quietly and listened, deeply interested in the new world into which she had so suddenly been thrown. It

was all so different from what she had expected. The previous week, spent in a fruitless search for work in the business section, had somewhat dampened her enthusiasm. Now, by some fillip of fate, she found her problems—for the time being at least—in a fair way toward being solved.

She was disappointed that Chanler had not shown a greater personal interest in her. She had, somehow, come to expect it from the men she met. He, on the contrary, seemed to regard her merely as an incident in the day's experience—as a stenographer, yes, but without that keen appreciation of her as a woman which so many other men had shown. It was not, she felt sure, that Chanler was lacking in admiration for her sex—she felt, indeed, that he was a man who had seen much of women and been loved by them—but his preoccupation with his work, his detached way of regarding the people about him, surprised and, truth to say, piqued her. She felt within this man lay the power to make her feel—to play havoc with her emotions, should he so choose—she wondered whether she could affect him in the same way.

They had been in the room perhaps half an hour when the doorbell rang, and Chanler rose to admit a tall, light-haired man, with queer, fuzzy whiskers and eyeglasses. He was accompanied by two women. The man, Emmy learned, was a well-known illustrator named Harrison. She thought he looked more like a peacefully inclined anarchist. One of the women, a striking brunette, proved to be a Miss Burt, his favorite model. The other, a Miss Nielsen, was a special writer upon one of the evening papers. She was a curious, mouse-like creature, with very bright eyes and a quick, decided way of speaking that caused people always to listen to her.

Chanler got out cigarettes and drinkables and soon

Emmy found herself lost in a maze of talk about people and things of which she knew nothing whatever. She sat quietly, listening and watching Miss Burt consume cigarette after cigarette with the most amazing rapidity. Chanler told her afterwards that this was the cause of the latter's peculiarly husky voice. She seemed always to be smoking them—in fact, she had insisted that Harrison bring her here instead of taking her to a show, in order that she might be able to indulge in her favorite pastime. She tossed the box over to Emmy and raised her eyebrows when the latter refused them. "Good Lord, how do you get along?" she cried, and inhaled deep draughts of the smoke. Finding Emmy where she was, she assumed that she belonged to their Bohemian crowd. Neither Norton nor Chanler volunteered any explanations.

Harrison sat at the piano and played snatches of operas and popular songs, beautifully, Emmy thought. The others paid no attention to him. Miss Burt plied Norton with questions about the Leland murder, or rather about the personality of the woman who had committed it. "Nervy, isn't she?" she said, as Norton concluded his description of the woman. "Gee, Archie, wouldn't do me much good to feed you rat poison, would it? All I'd come in for'd be a broken easel and a lot of debts." She strode over and rumpled his hair, and Harrison laughed.

"No use, Vi. I'm safe. Why don't you marry a millionaire?"

"I would if I weren't fool enough to be in love with *you*. That's the trouble with me. I know how to play my cards, but I haven't the nerve to do it. I get mushy over *that*." She pointed to Harrison's back, laughing. "And, yet, can you blame me?" She seized his head fiercely, bent it

back and kissed him. "Poor Archie, what'd he do if he didn't have me to cook breakfast for him?"

Harrison regarded her with a curious smile. He seemed a bit afraid of her. "No strings on you, Vi, you know."

"All right," she laughed harshly. "Some day I'll be untrue to you and then you'll be sorry." She went up to Chanler and laid her hand on his arm. "Say, Grant, don't you know some nice man, with lots of money and no sense, that might fall for me?"

Chanler looked at Emmy and laughed. "Since when have I been running a matrimonial agency?" he inquired.

Emmy surmised what this girl was to Harrison. Afterwards she learned that she had been living with him for the past year and was furiously jealous of every woman who looked at him.

The whole party, except Norton, was drinking beer, which Chanler produced from an ice-chest in the bathroom. Norton consumed numberless highballs, which seemed to have no particular effect upon him, except to increase his liveliness. Emmy let her glass stand before her, untasted. She had drank a cocktail and a glass of red wine at dinner; it amazed her to see Norton and the others consume drink after drink apparently without the least concern. Chanler seemed ill at ease. He had not supposed that Harrison would bring Miss Burt with him, and while his mode of life made him careless of the conventions, something in Emmy's manner told him that she was, so far at least, quite unused to such parties, and he feared her sense of the proprieties might be severely shocked.

It is curious that Chanler, with his large knowledge of women and of their love for unusual experiences, should have felt this. Perhaps it was only an inherited instinct.

Certainly Emmy felt no sense of injury at the girl's presence; on the contrary, she was observing her with the deepest interest and wondering why, with all her beauty, she was content to sell herself so cheaply.

The party rattled on for an hour or two, about nothing in particular. Emmy caught snatches of gossip here and there, unintelligible to her for the most part, having to do with the successes and failures of this or that friend or acquaintance. Some of the names so familiarly bandied about were well known to her—these people seemed to have no ideals, no illusions about their work. A well-known artist was picked to pieces for his treatment of his wife—a poet of international reputation, whose work Emmy knew slightly, and whose personality had always seemed to her almost godlike, was carelessly referred to as "Bertie," and Norton's description of his attempts to disrobe a few nights before and go to sleep in a coal bin, under the impression that it was his bed, evoked a storm of laughter.

Miss Nielsen went into shrieks over Harrison's account of a gay dinner party a few nights before, at which he had undertaken to convert a certain musician's bushy locks into a salad by the application of mayonnaise dressing. Chanler, too, had been present, and their description of the victim's appearance, after his mayonnaise shampoo, Emmy thought one of the funniest things she had ever heard in her life.

She examined Miss Nielsen intently. The woman was not over twenty-five, but as self-possessed as though she had been fifty. In her attitude toward men she seemed totally to disregard all considerations of sex and was ready to discuss any question, no matter how unconventional, with the freedom of a man. Emmy had never met

such a woman before, and it upset some of her pet theories frightfully. Here, evidently, was a woman who did not depend upon beauty, or charm, to get anything from life, but relied solely upon her brains. She was not sure that she liked Miss Nielsen, but her views on marriage interested her deeply.

They were discussing the case of a woman who had recently figured largely in the public eye, because she had abandoned her husband, a man of quiet tastes, and run off with her chauffeur. "She did perfectly right," Miss Nielsen announced. "The question is, after all, purely a biological one. Her husband loved books, and didn't want children. She hated books, and did. Of course, she didn't know that that was what she wanted—she thought it was love. The chauffeur was a big, handsome brute of twenty-five, with all Nature behind him fighting for her own. The woman was nothing but a pawn in the game. Marriage has but one logical purpose—children. Without them it becomes a joke."

All the talk was of life—quick-moving, passionate life—yet to Emmy it seemed life without dignity—without poise, without purpose. She, who had thought herself unconventional, began to intrench herself behind a bulwark of conventions.

She realized that Chanler, while in this life, was not of it. His companions jeered, good-naturedly, at his seriousness, but she could feel, instinctively, that they respected him for it and knew in their hearts that it would some day carry him beyond the confines of their frivolous little circle.

About eleven o'clock, Harrison invited them all to go to supper at a well-known uptown restaurant of New York's night life. Norton assented at once. He was al-

ways ready for any excuse to avoid going to bed. Chanler refused, on the plea of being tired. He thought it time that Emmy should be going home. The others left amid a whirl of indifferent repartee, and Emmy and Chanler were left alone.

He moved about, nervously, setting the room to rights. "Crazy bunch, aren't they?" he said. "Harrison's been illustrating some of my stories. Good man, too." He picked up his hat. "I think I'd better take you along home now, Miss Moran."

Emmy rose. "I'm sorry I must trouble you," she said.

"Oh, it's no trouble; I'm glad to go." He gave her a friendly look and for a moment she held his eyes. He looked deep into hers, then turned impatiently away. "We'll start in to-morrow and get some real work done." He glanced at a pile of papers on his desk. "I've been working out my chapter plots and scenes in longhand. I'll dictate from them."

Emmy nodded. "I'll come at nine."

"Better make it half-past," he said. "I don't get up very early. Shall we go now?"

During the walk home Chanler said little. He was preoccupied—nervous. Emmy told him about her life at home and her reason for coming to New York. She did not tell him the real reason. She said she wanted to be self-supporting.

That night, after she had given her mother a carefully expurgated account of the evening and told of her new position, she drew out her diary, and, sitting in her nightgown, wrote a few lines in it. Among others there occurred the following:

"Mr. Chanler isn't happy. He works too hard and

thinks too much. Some one ought to make him feel. What a pity he hasn't a lot of money! Miss Burt is in love with Mr. Harrison, but he is getting tired of her. When she loses him she won't have anything. After all, a woman might give everything for love if she knew she was going to keep it, but how often does she keep it? I wonder if Mr. Chanler *does* know any rich men. Miss Nielsen ought to have been a man. I'll bet she is a suffragette. I wonder if she would be willing to give her brains for my good looks. If she would, I wouldn't."

CHAPTER VIII

The following morning, Emmy, in a neat black silk shirtwaist and skirt, with white collar and cuffs, looking very business-like and demure, began to take dictation from Chanler.

At first it was slow work, and she made many mistakes, largely because of her nervousness, but in a week or two she had learned to follow his voice, had become familiar with his choice of words and was able to take them down almost as rapidly as he dictated them. When she got behindhand and was obliged to ask him to stop, she found him very kind and patient, and, in the main, she got along very well.

It was a very quiet and uneventful life. Chanler's friends seldom looked him up during the day, and at four o'clock, or earlier, when the light began to fade, it was his invariable habit to go out for a walk, and she saw him no more until the following morning. At five, or half-past, she closed her desk and went home.

Some sense of their relative positions made Chanler hesitate to ask her to join him or his friends during the evening. Possibly he realized the dangers of attempting to mix pleasure with business, consequently their real knowledge of each other progressed but slowly. She came to know him far better than he did her, as was natural under the circumstances. The man's work told much of himself, his outlook on life, his thoughts, his hopes, his ambitions. But of her he knew little more than when they

had first met. Always between them stood his desk, his work. It was a barrier that Emmy seldom attempted to cross, and he did not encourage her to do so.

She was greatly interested in his work, of course, and this sympathetic attitude on her part made dictating to her a pleasure. Often he would pause, asking her opinion as to a word, a phrase, a statement of some theory. She did not always follow his thought—some of his flights of fancy were beyond her, but, in the main, she understood, and appeared to agree, whether she always did or not.

His point of view was a novel one to her. Respecting women highly, he yet insisted upon treating them as human beings, and this gave to his arguments a materialistic tendency which she at first was inclined to resent. Why, he once asked her, should women expect from men a certain deference, a leniency in judgment, while at the same time asserting mental and moral superiority, or at least equality? If the codes for the two sexes were the same, why should women, he argued, not be judged by these codes as men were judged? Why should it be deemed an act beyond forgiveness for a man to cheat at cards, while for a woman to do so was regarded as a mere peccadillo, a privilege of the sex, to be laughed at, condoned, as one might condone the act of a naughty child? Why should women not feel the same sense of obligation, in the repayment of debts, that men felt? Why should a multiplicity of petty offenses against man's code be brushed aside with the remark, "Oh, but she's a woman"? Why, if women were bent upon assuming an equality with men in the world's affairs, should they still cling to sex privilege, sex exemption from the responsibilities this equality entailed? The most ardent advocates of women's rights, no less than the most feminine of the sex, held jealously to the preroga-

tive which caused the male to appear before them with uncovered head, in chivalrous humility, an outward and visible sign of deference to her weakness. Men still, in time of accident, stood aside until the women had been saved. In public conveyances they tendered their homage by offering them their seats. In matters of dress, of personal adornment, men slaved eternally to hang some bright-colored gee-gaw of great worth about some woman's neck, yet in their hearts laughed, and regarded it as a childish practice of the weaker sex. Chanler gladly paid women homage for the things for which he felt it was due, but he resented the attempt, which so many women made, to be on both sides of the fence at once, whereby they reached out for the prerogatives of men with one hand, and still clung to all the privileges of women with the other. He argued in favor of women becoming economically self-supporting, and believed that if men were to treat them less as children, and more as equals, society would rest upon a far more secure and moral basis.

The impression that Emmy got from all this was that Chanler regarded the woman who married for support and gave in return only herself as a social parasite. Realizing her own self-confessed intentions, she winced under his bitter arguments. Yet when she walked home of an evening and saw the women on the Avenue, in their motors, their sables, their jewels, she longed for these things as for her daily bread, and could see no brightness in a future which consisted of earning twelve dollars a week bending over a typewriter.

Once, in a vague way, it occurred to her that the fault was not hers—that women were trained to one profession only; that but one future was held out to them—to marry and have a home. Had not her father taught her this—

her mother—from infancy? She spoke to Chanler about it, and he seemed pleased that she had thought as she had. "Until we stop training women to be wives," he said, "and teach them to be citizens, they will never progress one iota." Emmy thought it might be true, but it was too late to begin, in her case.

In December, Emmy and her mother took a small, four-room apartment on Eighty-first Street and set up housekeeping for themselves. The apartment was furnished, and Mrs. Moran, in the little kitchenette, found occupation in preparing for herself and Emmy the many little dishes the boarding-house did not afford. It was far more comfortable than their single room at Mrs. Wright's, and not much more expensive. Emmy's earnings somewhat more than covered the rent. Whatever more was needed came from the hoarded life insurance money.

If Chanler had any wealthy friends, Emmy had not so far met them. In fact, he saw but few people of any sort. He worked incessantly throughout the winter and early spring, driving himself on with tireless energy to complete the novel before summer. His other work, short stories, novelettes, essays, special articles, took much of his time; often the novel lay untouched for many days, while Emmy wrote down things that Chanler swore at and called "piffling nonsense." But he sold them, and that was, for the moment, the essential thing.

He planned to go away in May for the summer. His doctor had ordered him to take a long rest, and as he had never been to Europe, he intended to spend three months in Italy, Switzerland and France. He looked forward to the trip joyously, but it was essential to his enjoyment of it that the novel should be finished before he went. Any

attempt to rest, with his great task uncompleted, would have been but an irritation.

In the course of so many days spent together, it was inevitable that these two people, young and vital, should come to feel the mysterious attraction of sex. Chanler had, more than once, felt Emmy's eyes, glowing with youth and the fulness of life, burn into his, but he kept to his work and made no sign. Rather, she thought, he tried purposely to avoid any relationship other than that of employer and employee. In the earlier stages of their acquaintance she fancied him in love with some other woman, and used every means to find out whether or not this was the case. In the end she was forced to conclude that it was not; that he was but saving his strength, concentrating his every energy on the work in hand, and, womanlike, she strove by every means in her power to break down his indifference. She knew that it was an assumed indifference, not a real one—that with his temperament no woman with *her* beauty could really be indifferent to him. She knew, too, that should he let himself go, should she succeed in breaking down the wall of reserve with which he surrounded himself, their present relations would either be continued in a whirlwind of folly, or cease altogether. Yet with feminine perversity she persisted in her attempts.

Occasionally she would put a few flowers on his desk. At other times she would manage, apparently by accident, to touch his hand. She made little appeals to him in the way of dress, of perfumes, of pretended indispositions. Once or twice, while he was out, she had explored his bedroom and carried off bundles of socks to be darned. At other times she would leave the way open for him to ask her to dinner; would speak of her mother having a head-

ache—of her own love for the restaurant cooking which Chanler abhorred. He almost invariably ignored her appeals—the only satisfaction she had lay in the knowledge that he frequently did so only with considerable effort.

Yet she knew that he was very fond of her—she realized, intuitively, that he would suffer if she were suddenly to go out of his life. She almost hated him, at times, for the determination which made it possible for him to look at her glowing beauty unmoved, seeing nothing but the words of some trenchant passage as they formed themselves in his brain.

Once he was ill with a severe cold and lay on the couch, dictating feebly, but with mind unclouded by his physical weakness. On that occasion she had knelt beside him, smoothed his burning forehead, prepared him a hot drink. His barriers were down that day. He put his arms about her and kissed her on the forehead. "Dear little girl," he said, "what should I do without you?"

Emmy was disappointed. His kiss was passionless, the kiss of a brother. Why, she stormed, inwardly, could she not break through his coldness—set fire to his emotions? That she continually failed to do so left her with a sense of annoyance, as though in some way the fault were her own. She never admitted to herself that to make him love her was really her object, but in her heart of hearts she knew that it was—she knew that because this man resisted her she desired him—or at least desired that he should desire her.

One evening in April he took her to dinner at a famous French restaurant not far from Madison Square. It was a place for people with bank accounts, or, at least, for those who spent as though they had bank accounts. Rare wines and rarer prices were characteristic of the menu, not

because the guests were such connoisseurs—wine, indeed, to the majority of them meant a bottle of champagne—but because they came to this place to spend money—visitors to the city, lavishing in a week the jealously hoarded savings of a year; successful race-track followers, promoters, automobile salesmen, wine agents and a sprinkling of actors and professional men. All came with their women, the wives vying with the mistresses in their attempts to outshine each other in the matter of dress, jewels, powder and paint. It was an evidence of prosperity to spend twenty-five dollars for dinner for two at this place—tips in other form than bills were looked upon as insults by the waiters, and over the door might well have been written, "All cash abandon, ye who enter here."

Chanler had suggested the place, because he had most unexpectedly that day made a sale of a novelette for a thousand dollars, and he felt that some celebration of the event was necessary. He took Emmy, because, as he said, one may be able to eat alone, but one cannot dine alone. And the difference between eating and dining is great, both in time and money.

Emmy was rather surprised by the invitation. She refused to accompany him as she was, in her neat working-clothes, and insisted upon going up to Eighty-first Street and donning a black *crepe de chine* with violet trimmings, a confection which she and her mother had painfully created during the preceding month. It did not show the hand of a fashionable costumer, it is true, but it would have taken more than that to have hidden Emmy's charms—she looked like a radiant young houri, and Chanler caught his breath when he saw her. After all, a pair of svelte corsets, a low-cut neck and a new method of dress-

ing the hair have caused many a man to change his point of view.

He felt very proud of her as they crossed the big dining-room to their table. The novel was nearing completion—the sale of the novelette had solved all immediate financial problems—the spring air had given a new color to his cheeks—a new brightness to his eyes. "The devil was ill—the devil a saint would be; the devil got well—the devil a saint was he." Emmy might have smiled over the lines had she known them, which she did not. What she did do was to match his own unwonted gaiety with the fulness of her youthful exuberance and charm—she smoothed the pathway of love for him, with a thousand feminine devices, all seeing to say to him, "I am young and beautiful and full of delights. Why do you not take me for your own?" Diana, the huntress, is falsely represented with bow and arrow. She hunts with snares, baited with the apple of desire, and from behind the ambush of her downcast lashes watches for her victims.

Yet in this encounter, as in all previous ones, Emmy was destined not to win. Chanler started off the evening with a gaiety of spirits unusual in him, and increased it with cocktails and champagne. Soon he began to make her compliments; he looked ardently into her eyes, and when their hands accidentally touched, as they did once or twice across the table, he pressed her responsive fingers joyously. His gaiety was, however, but temporary. His tired nerves, worn with overwork, responded to stimulation only to relapse into a state of greater numbness. They had scarcely reached their coffee before Emmy noticed the coming reaction. She felt that she was losing, and strove to stimulate his flagging interest by giving out her own

charm with lavish hand, but she realized that it fell upon ashes.

By ten o'clock, Chanler was tired. The heavy meal, the smoke, the warm room, made him sleepy. He strove against it as best he could, but the sparkle, the physical joy of living had died down in him, and he could not rekindle it. Had Emmy appealed to his love, instead of his passion, she might have taken his tired head on her breast and found him a child, but the maternal instinct was not strong in her, to-night. She wore the girdle of Aphrodite, and her soul yearned to conquer, not to serve.

Chanler realized, on his part, the bitter price he was paying for success. Overwork, loss of sleep (he suffered greatly from insomnia), worry, all had sapped his strength, his vitality. He longed for stretches of warm beach, for the droning of bees in the sun, for sleep. Sometimes he felt as though he could sleep for years.

During this meal he gave to Emmy much deep thought. He had never yet come to say to himself, I love this woman. He would have refused to entertain the thought, even had it been present in his mind. Marriage was a state he feared, the death-knell of hope for the artist, at least until success had been won. Its load of responsibilities, sordid details, petty annoyances, terrified him, and the other alternative, that of making Emmy his mistress, had, in truth, never entered his mind. He knew life, as his companions lived it, quite well. He knew women, many women, and had taken what they offered him, as men do, but he fought fair, with women who knew the game of life as well as he did, better, perhaps, and if they fenced with pointed foils they were ready to take the consequences. He felt differently about Emmy. To have beaten down this young girl's defences, through the strength of any

love she might bear for him, he would have thought as dastardly as to have accomplished the same result by drugging her.

And here he fell into the error which the sensitive man so frequently makes in his dealings with women. He regarded Emmy as a young and unsophisticated girl, virtuous, innocent, and clearly impressed by his attractive personality. Had he suddenly discovered that she was head over heels in love with him he would have blamed himself bitterly (albeit with a secret sense of satisfaction) that he had unwittingly brought about such a state of affairs. It did not occur to him, since he was not trying to seduce Emmy, that the shoe might be on the other foot; that her flashes of interest, of passion, of rapt adoration of his pet theories might be, not the effect of his attractive personality upon *her*, but the weapons with which she was endeavoring to exert her own influence upon *him*. And this was the more to be wondered at since Chanler, in his theories, his writings, did not make the mistake of supposing all women to be either good or bad, moral or immoral, saints or devils, but knew perfectly well that within the vast majority of the sex lay the same possibilities for good or evil that his own sex possessed. Women, as a class, he dealt with as human beings, understanding their weaknesses, their frailties, their desires. Confronted by this woman, individually, he at once placed her upon a pedestal of virtuous ignorance and treated her, not as a flesh-and-blood young animal, with very definite ideas in her shapely head as to what she wanted from life, but as an interesting child, looking upon the world with astonished eyes and a fluttering heart, utterly ignorant upon all subjects not taught in young ladies' seminaries.

He would have characterized this attitude toward Emmy

as an evidence of manly chivalry. In reality it was the expression of a worn-out creed, born of male conceit, whereby woman is loaded down with a variety of superhuman attributes of man's own invention, only to be blamed when her every-day humanity makes it impossible for her to live up to them. He was not the first man to treat a woman as an angel, and be thought by her a fool.

Let us, however, not do Emmy an injustice. She neither wished to marry Chanler, nor to give herself to him without marriage. She was striving to conquer him through the sheer joy of the effort. In the attempt she had naturally come to think a great deal of him. Had he himself desired either result sufficiently he might, no doubt, have swept her into acquiescence. She often pictured herself as his wife, and felt that, should his book accord him the success he anticipated, she might readily bring herself to marry him. The more she thought of the matter the more it seemed to her that he was the one man she had ever met that she might really care for. She seemed to want him in her life very greatly; to give him up would have cost her much.

They finished their meal in silence, with a sense of something lacking. Emmy hoped that Chanler would suggest that they go to the studio, where he might lie on the couch and smoke, while she sat beside him and held his hand. She thought of suggesting it. As they passed into the hall a man in evening clothes was just entering it from the café on the opposite side. He turned, saw Chanler and came up, with a smile. "Hello, Grant!" he exclaimed, flicking his eyes lightly over Emmy as he talked. "I'm bored stiff. Missed a party I'd arranged to dine with and have been eating all alone in the café. Was just going. Let's go in and have a liqueur and a cigar."

Chanler hesitated. He was tired and had intended to turn in early, but this man, Wiemar, was an old friend whom he saw seldom, but always gladly.

"Let me introduce you to Miss Moran, Carl," he said. "Emmy, this is Mr. Wiemar."

Emmy put out her hand and Wiemar bent over it. He was a man of perhaps thirty-eight, dark, with a small mustache and imperial. His manner was distinguished, with a light-hearted gaiety which bespoke a fine flow of animal spirits.

"I wish I might make a magazine cover of you, Miss Moran," he flashed at Emmy, as they seated themselves about a table.

"A magazine cover?" Emmy failed to understand him. She heard Chanler chuckle. "Mr. Wiemar is an artist," he said. "He does all those impossibly beautiful magazine covers you see on the news-stands."

"If Miss Moran would pose for me," said Wiemar, earnestly, "they would no longer be impossible. She is the reality——"

Emmy turned, and their eyes met. Wiemar's seemed to emit tiny yellow sparks. "Why not?" he said. "I'm lways looking for the ideally beautiful face. You have it, Miss Moran. Be generous, and let the world see it, through the medium of my humble abilities as a painter."

She looked at Chanler, who seemed to find in Wiemar's words food for much thought. He sat gazing down at the table and making little rings on the wet marble top with the bottom of his glass. "I—I'd be glad to pose for you, Mr. Wiemar," Emmy said, haltingly, as Chanler failed to look up. "But, you see, I'm not free during the week."

"Miss Moran is my secretary," announced Chanler, with an air of proprietorship.

"Then come on Sunday," went on Wiemar, evidently not to be balked. "I do a lot of work on Sunday. I'm in the Turner Studios, on Gramercy Park. Tenth floor." He turned to Chanler. "Why don't you bring Miss Moran down some day, Grant? I haven't a model to compare with her."

"I'm afraid I can't, Carl. I'm sailing for Europe before long. But if Miss Moran wishes to come—" he paused, evidently implying that Emmy was quite at liberty to make her own engagements.

"I'll count on you, Miss Moran. Come soon, though. I'm going out of town myself, in June. Ought to go before, but I've a lot of work I must finish up." He turned to Chanler. "How's the novel coming along, old man?"

"Nearly done, and so am I," Chanler laughed, grimly, as he tossed off his *curaçoa*.

"You *do* look seedy," said Wiemar, eyeing him critically. "Been overdoing it, I suppose. You take life too seriously, old chap. Why don't you play more?" He turned to Emmy, laughing. "I should think *you* could make him forget work once in a while, Miss Moran. The wonder is he ever does any." The bold glance of his eye told Emmy of his admiration.

"*You* can *afford* to play," said Chanler, smiling somewhat wearily. "You've made good. I haven't. I guess you weren't so light-hearted, either, when you lived in that loft on Eighteenth Street."

Wiemar laughed, and he and Chanler fell to talking of old times. Presently the latter glanced at the clock.

"Good Lord!" he cried, "it's half-past eleven. I've got to take Miss Moran home."

"Since when have you begun to think half-past eleven late?" asked Wiemar.

"Ever since I discovered I had a set of nerves," said Chanler, rising.

When they parted, Wiemar gave Emmy's hand a distinct squeeze and darted into her eyes a look of supreme adoration, reminding her once more of her promise to come and pose for him.

Chanler took her uptown in the subway and left her at her door. He seemed troubled about something, and once she thought he intended to kiss her good-night, but he evidently thought better of it.

When she tried to write in her diary that night the words refused to come. She felt tired, dull. The only thing she wrote was:

"Carl Wiemar, Turner Studios, Gramercy Park."

All that night she tossed about in troubled dreams, wherein she strove, endlessly, to force Chanler to kiss her, only to find that he invariably eluded her. Once she awoke, her arms clasped about her pillow, her face burning as though with a fever. She got up and drank a glass of water and blamed it on the champagne she had drunk.

CHAPTER IX.

It was toward the close of a blue and gold afternoon in the latter part of May, and in spite of the lateness of the hour, Chanler was still dictating, rewriting one of the already finished chapters of his book. He walked up and down, restlessly, from the Bokhara beside the desk to the little rough Anatolia mat and back, over and over again, failing now and then for a word, then driving on so rapidly that Emmy's flying fingers could scarcely keep up with him. This had been going on steadily for three hours, and she was tired. Had it not been for Chanler's anxiety to finish she would have begged for a rest, but he was going away the next day.

She watched the man in his intervals of profound thought, and it seemed to her that never before had he so powerfully attracted her. She longed to throw down her notebook and fling her arms about his neck. When he looked at her, her heart seemed to beat faster; almost she felt that he must notice her agitation. Then she realized that his eyes were unseeing; that though they swept her face, her throbbing figure, in its soft, clinging dress, they saw nothing.

He began again, and she dropped her eyes to the book before her. She heard him saying: "Nature, in her ceaseless efforts to perpetuate animal life upon the globe, has evolved three great primary laws which the human race must obey, along with all other living creatures. These three laws we cannot escape. They lie at the root of all

human actions. They are, first, the law of sexual attraction, or love, which causes the sexes to produce offspring. Second, the law of mother love, the blind maternal instinct which secures to the offspring food and care during the period of helplessness and until it has reached an age at which it can care for itself. The third law, that of self-preservation, here steps in to preserve and carry on the life which the two other laws have created and nurtured. Thus we have the complete circle of human existence — creation, through sex love; nurture, through mother love; preservation, through love of life. There is in Nature's scheme of things no other provision than this trinity of love for the existence and perpetuation of the race. To regard the instinct which drives the female into the arms of the male, which impels the male to seek and possess the female, as unnatural, or sinful, is as absurd as to regard mother love as sinful, or to similarly characterize the love of life, the desire to live, which drives mankind onward in all the countless paths of human activity."

He paused, took a cigarette from the tin on the desk, and flung himself into a chair.

Emmy looked at him expectantly. She thought he had finished. He raised his hand and again began to speak, and she listlessly took down the words:

"The woman who denies the existence within herself of the desire for the opposite sex, who denies that she has many times wished that some member of it—and not necessarily always the same member—might pursue and possess her, either lies, or is devoid of those instincts which of necessity go to make up the perfect woman." Emmy took down the words with flushed cheeks. How deeply this man seemed to understand women, or, at least, herself!

She, at this moment, desired him; something within her beat upon her throbbing temples, burnt in her hot cheeks; something that called to him to take her, crush her to him, bend her to his will. She tried to down the feeling, for it made her afraid, but it possessed her utterly. She shivered, although she did not feel cold.

Chanler, wrapt in his subject, observed nothing of all this. She bent her head to avoid his eyes, fearful lest he should discover her secret, inwardly hoping that he might.

He tossed his half-smoked cigarette into the fireplace and again rose. "That's all. Mark it 'End of Part One,'" he said. "What do you think of it?"

It was no new thing, his asking her this. Often, during the past months, he had sought her opinion of a plot—a chapter. Usually she had agreed with him. Sometimes, of late, they had argued, fought—earnestly, intensely.

"Do you really believe women are like that?" she asked, slowly.

He looked at her in surprise, noting her subdued voice, into which, in spite of her efforts, had crept a note of hoarseness.

"Certainly. Don't you?"

She did not reply. What could she say to such a question? The truth? How could she tell him the truth? Yet they had agreed never to lie to each other.

"Come!" He stepped toward her with a new interest. "You are a woman—a young and vital woman. Tell me the real truth. Women are taught to cover up their instincts, to regard them as wrong, wicked. *You* tell me the truth. Tell me what women really think and feel."

"Can't you ask some—some other woman that?" she said, her eyes seeking his almost fearfully. "Ask some-

body like—like Miss Burt. She ought to be able to tell you."

He laughed lightly, then became suddenly serious. "I really want to know," he said. "I ask you, because you are a good woman. Those—others—well—their opinion wouldn't be worth much, but yours would mean something. Aren't you, after all, very much like men, in your thoughts—your feelings?"

She flushed. "Understand me," he said, "I do not criticize or blame you for it. I see no more reason why a woman should not possess the instincts of sex than a man. They are not wrong—or ignoble. Aren't you really just the same as *we* are?"

"How are *you?*" she asked, evasively.

"Oh, well. I suppose men are pretty much alike in that respect—some feel more than others—that's all. We don't deny our feelings—although it does not necessarily follow that we indulge them. I see a beautiful woman—a creature of blood and flesh, radiant with life. Naturally she affects me—perhaps she tries to affect me. I do not deny my feelings. Why should I? After all, it's probably a mere electric or telepathic effect—a material thing—as material as the contagion of laughter, or gloom, or enthusiasm. The woman looks into my eyes—I look into hers—a wave impulse passes from one brain to the other, and back again. We live together for the fraction of a second, then pass on. In a moment I have forgotten her, and she, me. But for the moment I have desired her—instinctively, unintentionally—and, indeed, quite honorably. If I, for the instant, found her desirable it was but an acknowledgment of her charms. It does not follow that I must seek her out, attempt to possess her. But to deny the impulse—bah!—as well deny the sun."

She listened—amazed by his frankness. They said Chanler was a man who had a code, and lived up to it. She wondered what his code was—when he considered it legitimate to indulge his instincts and when not.

"You think, then, that it is not the instinct, but the giving in to it, which is wrong?" she asked.

"Yes."

"But how, if the instinct is right, can it be wrong to follow it?" She faced him with an inquiring look.

"Perhaps it is not wrong," he said, steadily, "from a purely natural and material standpoint, provided, of course, two people both desire it and are not bound. But there are other things to be considered besides natural impulses. We live in a world of conventions, and conventions are useful, and desirable, like clothes, to protect us from nature. Too many conventions make us artificial, but we cannot abandon them altogether, without reverting to savagery. But you have not answered my question. Am I right? Do women feel, desire, as men do?"

She turned away, with a shiver, as his eyes met hers. That he should ask *her* this question.

"Tell me," he pressed her. "You know you promised always to tell me the truth." It was a promise, laughingly made, in the course of an argument some weeks before.

Emmy began to speak, but her words trailed off into a dismal, meaningless confusion. She sank into a chair, and, leaning her face on her arms, out-thrown on the desk, began to sob, hysterically. The emotions with which she had thought to play had risen up to smite her.

Chanler stopped in his pacing up and down and gazed at her heaving shoulders in astonishment. "What on earth is the matter, Emmy?" he asked, tenderly. "I—I didn't suppose you'd mind my asking you a thing like

that. We've always talked so frankly. Of course, you needn't answer me if you'd rather not." He leaned over, and taking her wrists in his hands, drew her to her feet.

She raised her face, upon which, in spite of her sobbing, there were no tears. He held her by each of her forearms, bare to the elbow, and the pressure of his fingers sent a glow throughout her whole body. His eyes, questioning, surprised, sought hers. "What is it, Emmy?" he asked again. Her beauty, her evident distress, broke tumultuously through his shell of reserve. He was conscious of a mounting desire to take her in his arms, but he resisted it.

She met his eyes bravely, her face upturned, her hands clenched. "There are some men," she faltered, "that—that make almost any woman feel——"

He dropped her arms and took a step from her. The full force of her admission had not yet reached him. "What do you mean?" he asked, vaguely.

"Oh—Grant—Grant!" she cried, throwing her arms out to him, passionately. "I mean you—you—you!"

Then he understood. This woman, this girl, whom he had treated all these weeks and months as an automaton, sitting before him, filling note-books with penciled hieroglyphics, was, after all, flesh and blood, like the rest of her sex, and she loved *him*. He cursed his stupidity, yet realized how often the investigator of the general is blind to the specific, how frequently the man who knows women may fail to understand a woman. That she possessed the usual emotions of her sex did not surprise him, but that these emotions were directed toward *him*—he looked up—she stood before him, beautiful, inviting. The descent from the general to the specific was rapid and tumultuous. Her passionate declaration of his attraction for her, which he understood to mean that she loved him, set his brain

aflame. Never before had he realized how beautiful she was. And now, after this, their companionship must end. If he rejected her he would, in all probability, never see her again. The mere suggestion filled him with a sense of loneliness. Emmy, her lovely, piquant face, her daily presence, her simple but shrewd comments upon his work, had all become a part of his life. Suddenly, looking at her, he felt that he had loved her all these months, but, in his preoccupation with his work, had not realized it. He held out his arms to her and she stumbled into them, her hot face upturned, her lips awaiting his. Then he kissed her.

"I love you, Emmy, I love you!" he gasped, and pressed his lips to hers almost reverently. Even now, though she had awakened his passion, some stronger emotion overmastered it and made him tender. She, on her part, flung wide the floodgates of desire. She seemed floating away in a flaming mist.

Suddenly she drew away from him, amazed at herself. The love he offered her seemed cold in comparison with her own riotous emotions. She turned aside, wondering, now that she had brought him to her knees, just why she had done so. "I—I had better go," she said, and moved, uncertainly, toward the table, upon which lay her hat and gloves.

"Go? Where? Good God, Emmy! I'm never going to let you go away from me again as long as I live."

"You must," she returned, quietly. "You are sailing for Europe to-morrow."

He began to stride up and down, restlessly. "I won't go. I can get along here, all right. I don't need the rest. I won't go."

"You must." She put her hand on his arm. "You

have been working too hard. You need the trip. All your plans are made. You must go." She knew it would be best for him; that his condition made the rest, the sea air, a necessity. Yet she secretly hoped, in spite of her words, that he would not go, or that, if he did, he would take her with him.

The touch of her hand on his arm turned his thoughts again to her. "Then, if I do go—you shall go with me." He again swept her into his arms and kissed her savagely. The thought of parting from her seemed unendurable.

"But," she cried, struggling away from him, "I—*I* couldn't go."

"Why not? We'll be married in the morning—before the steamer sails. I'll get the license—I'll make them change my room—you'll go with me, dear, as my wife."

To this she made no reply, and he, in his enthusiasm, seemed to expect none. She began to put on her gloves. Somehow the thought of marriage filled her with misgivings. She knew what it would mean to Chanler—to herself. He had a great, a definite purpose in life—the success of his work. So far it had brought him but a bare existence. There was no assurance that his new novel would be a success; the chances, in fact, were against it, for big success, in work of that sort, she knew came to but few. Was she ready to share his poverty—his failure, should failure come? And her own plans—the object to which she had determined to bend every effort—a rich marriage. Was this to go down in wreck and confusion, the result of a May madness? She thought of long months—years of economy, of doing without, and shuddered. Yet there was his book—it might make him a comparatively rich man. She stood trembling, undecided, on the knife-edge of decision. On the one hand, Chanler

and her love for him; on the other, all the material things of life. A feather might turn the scales. It was for him to decide.

He did so, with hot enthusiasm. He drew her close to him, pressing his lips to her flaming cheeks. "You love me, dear, don't you?" he asked.

"You are the only man I have ever known that I could love," she said, yielding herself to him. "But don't you think we should wait?"

"Wait? Why?"

"I might be a burden to you. You have your work—your success to make. You might regret——"

"Nonsense!" He pointed to the pile of typewritten pages on the desk. "This book is going to make my fortune. Wilson says he will have it out in September. By Christmas we'll be rich—rich. Won't it be fine, Emmy, my darling?"

His enthusiasm left her cold. The horrible thought that the book might not succeed rose incessantly in her mind like a grinning spectre, deriding her passion.

"I—I think I had better go," she said, putting on her hat.

"No!" He playfully took the hat-pins from her. "You belong to me now."

"But, Grant, dear—I must go home and—and dress."

"All right. And pack your things, too. You won't need much. We'll get more in Paris. Meet me at Colatti's at seven o'clock. That will give you time. And I'll see about the stateroom and all that while you're gone." He held her hands, tenderly. "What difference do money or clothes or anything else make so long as I have *you*?"

"Very well. I'll be there. At seven." She moved toward the door, and he came over with her, kissing her good-by.

His warmth seemed to increase as her own decreased. She hardly understood herself—her feelings. The passion of the moment had left her, and in its place had come a strange, questioning listlessness. She felt tired, and wondered if she really cared for him so deeply, after all.

Outside, the hurrying crowds, the roaring street, brought her back to a sense of the realities of life. A richly dressed woman, in wonderful furs, getting into her automobile at an apartment-house on the Avenue, made her suddenly envious. She secretly hated her. Yet there was love—to compensate her for everything she might lose. Would it be enough—would it be enough? The thought pounded in her brain all the way to Eighty-first Street.

At home she found her mother, patiently concocting veal stew for their dinner. She said nothing to her of her plans. Later in the evening would be time enough. Nor did she do any packing. The whole thing seemed unreal, somehow—as though it could never happen.

In an evening paper, which she had bought on the way uptown, was an account of the latest society *mesalliance*. The son of a trust magnate had married a shop girl, and the two, ensconced in a tiny flat in the Bronx, were awaiting the parental blessing. The father was reputed to be worth sixty millions, and the girl—judging from the photograph in the newspaper—was, Emmy thought, no more attractive than she herself. She sighed, hopelessly. Then she thought of Chanler's kisses, and was, for the moment, glad.

She met him for dinner at seven and was surprised by his air of depression. In a few words he explained the situation. He had not been able to get the marriage license—it was necessary that she should go to the Bureau with him. And he could not get a stateroom on the steamer—they

were all taken. The best he could do would be to secure accommodations on a vessel sailing over two weeks later. The summer rush of travel had already begun—the steamers were all booked up. June tenth was the very earliest date for which he could secure a room. Then, too, Jack Benson, an old friend, was leaving on the steamer to-morrow—they had planned to "do" Paris together. And his trunk had already gone to the dock and must be recalled. And his mother, who lived in Philadelphia, was coming over in the morning to see him off. They were not serious objections, surely, and he made light of them, but she could see that, in his sick and nervous condition, they worried him. "We'll be married to-morrow and run down to Atlantic City for two weeks. We'll sail on June tenth." That was his final word, and although she interposed numberless objections, he dismissed them all with a shrug of his shoulders. And still she could see that he was not, mentally, at ease.

They returned to the studio, after dinner, and on the way Emmy made a sudden resolve. She would insist on his going to-morrow, and alone. No harm could come of a separation of a few months. She would have opportunity to think things over, and he—well—he might think differently, too, later on. She was fighting against herself—she knew that however much she might oppose him—oppose their hasty marriage—she would still secretly hope, in her heart, that her protests would be of no avail. But in case they should be—in case he was willing to be persuaded—why, then—would it not be better so?

He talked incessantly on the way home—of themselves and their future. He had an idea of building a bungalow, somewhere on Long Island, by the sea, where they could live a simple, natural life. Emmy would cook their tiny

meals and they would find perfect happiness in each other's arms. It was a delightful dream—but Emmy's dreams, somehow, ran in different channels. He did not observe her lack of enthusiasm—his own amply made up the deficiency.

It was while she was helping him pack his suitcase that Emmy's resolve expressed itself in words.

"Grant," she said, "after all, I think you had better go on the steamer to-morrow, as you had planned."

"Why?" He paused, in the act of folding up a pair of trousers. "What do you mean?"

She sat on the couch and looked at him. "I'm afraid," she said, steadily, "that we are making a mistake. Marriage is a serious matter. We ought both to think it over. All your plans are made. Your mother will be angry—disappointed. Your friend will have to go without you. You are not well—all this worry, this upsetting of your plans, will do you harm. There is no reason why we should not wait a few months. If you love me now, you will then, and if you should change your mind, how much better—to know it beforehand——"

"But I won't change my mind," he said, rising. "I love you."

"I know it, dear. But you'll love me just as much in three months, won't you?"

"Of course I will," he said, sitting down beside her and drawing her to him. "How can you ask me that?"

"Then you will go—without me?"

"Do you really want me to?" he asked. She fancied she detected a note of relief in his voice.

"Yes. I know it will be better."

"No. I won't do it. I can't go—anywhere—without you. And what would *you* do—all that time?.

She pointed to the pile of manuscript on the table. "I'll have plenty to do. All that has to be copied, you know. It will take weeks."

He followed her glance. "I can get Miss Myers to do it. She used to do all my work."

"She couldn't read my notes. And she'd be sure to make mistakes. You told me yourself that she always did. Let me stay and do it, Grant. I'd much rather. I don't want to do anything that will make your mother dislike me."

He rose and began to walk about. "Why should she?" he demanded, as though to himself.

As he spoke, the bell of the apartment rang. Chanler hurried to the door, then threw it open in surprise. Emmy saw a woman's figure, in black, entering. Instinctively, even before Chanler stooped to kiss her, she knew that it was his mother. She rose, standing by the desk, uncomfortable. "Why, mother," she heard him say, "I thought you weren't coming until to-morrow?"

"I thought I would give you a surprise, dear." Her voice was low and unusually sweet. Then, seeing Emmy, she stopped, gazing at her questioningly.

Chanler, after a moment's confusion, introduced them. "This is Miss Moran, mother. My secretary. I've spoken of her, in my letters, you remember?"

Mrs. Chanler bowed, stiffly. Emmy returned her nod even more stiffly. "Miss Moran and I," Chanler went on, evidently feeling that to his mother's old-fashioned ideas some explanation of this girl's presence in his studio at half-past ten at night was necessary, "have been talking over a very important matter. We are going to be married."

"Married!" Mrs. Chanler did her best to conceal her astonishment. "When?"

"To-morrow."

"But, Grant, my dear boy, you sail to-morrow."

"I know. At least I *was*. But we've decided——"

"Grant, don't tell me you're not going. Dr. Benton wrote me that you are on the verge of a breakdown. He says you need at least three months of absolute rest." She turned to Emmy almost resentfully. "Surely, Miss Moran, if you care for my son, as you must if he intends to marry you, you will see that nothing—nothing *whatever*—is permitted to interfere with this trip. The doctor has ordered it."

Emmy turned to her, with the old, fathomless smile in her eyes. She knew now that the die was cast and she faced the situation calmly. "I have told Grant," she said, quietly, "that he must go to-morrow, without me. When he comes back we can talk about our—marriage."

"You see, Grant," Mrs. Chanler gave a sigh of relief, "Miss Moran quite agrees with me. Please, dear, don't do anything foolish. It is your duty to Miss Moran, to me, to us all, to get well and strong first. Promise me you will sail to-morrow."

He felt deeply annoyed, resentful, as a man of thirty does when his plans are upset by parental interference. His mother seemed to regard him as a child.

Emmy, who had been putting on her hat, went toward the door. "I must go now, Grant," she said. "You will want to be with your mother. I'll come in the morning, as usual. Good-night. Good-night, Mrs. Chanler." She bowed to his mother and opened the door.

"Wait!" cried Chanler, and went with her into the hall.

"Don't be foolish, dear," she said, before he could speak. "Your mother is right. Go alone—to-morrow—as you

had planned. I insist upon it. I want time to think. Do as I ask—please."

He stood, uncertain, twirling in his hands the hat which he had grasped from the table. He seemed terribly nervous—ill. The very necessity of making the decision upset him. Overwork had brought him to such a pass that all he wanted was peace. The grasshopper had become a burden.

"You—you really mean it, Emmy?" he asked, in a hurt tone. "You don't want to marry me—now?"

She knew, then, that she had won—and lost. "No," she said, firmly. "I've reconsidered. I'm not going to marry you now. I'm going to stay here and wait, and when your book is a success, and you are well and strong again, and I know your mother better, and all that—then we'll be married. But not now, Grant. I feel that it would be a mistake."

He drew her to him. "My dearest girl," he said, kissing her, "you are so unselfish. You are always thinking of me—of my welfare."

"Why shouldn't I, dear? I love you." She lay a moment in his arms, then pushed him away. "Now go. I'll see you in the morning."

"Poor Grant!" she said to herself, as she went toward the subway. "I don't believe he understands women very well, after all." Beyond that her thoughts became conflicting, confused. She was glad—she was sorry—underneath them all ran a deep undercurrent, the appeal of her elemental, virile nature. Chanler had disappointed her. If he had dragged her by the hair to a Justice of the Peace, in spite of God, man or devil, and *forced* her to marry him, she would have worshipped him—adored him—been his slave. How she had longed for him to decide

everything for her. Emmy was primitive. Chanler was not.

When she got to her room she took off her clothes, put on a kimona, and, throwing herself on the bed, burst into choking sobs. She hated Chanler, hated his grave and quiet manner, his simple tenderness, even the fact that he was ill and tired annoyed her. She felt no desire to clasp his weary head to her breast—to smooth his forehead and watch over his sleep. Why had he not swept her from her feet in a mad ecstasy of passion? Why had he not taken her in his arms and insisted on her going with him? Why had he not beaten her, choked her, used her for his own? She had thought she wanted to conquer, but, after all, she knew that she only wanted to be conquered—and Chanler had not done it. What folly it all was—leading to nothing. She drew out her diary, thinking to relieve her throbbing brain by writing down the thoughts which crowded through it. She looked at the page for half an hour and wrote but a single line:

"Oh, Grant, Grant! Why didn't you *make* me marry you?"

CHAPTER X

Now that Chanler had gone, Emmy settled down to a life of dull, colorless monotony. Each morning she proceeded to the studio—he had left her a key to the rooms—and spent the hours from ten until five in transcribing her notes, or copying the apparently endless pages of corrected manuscript. Her presence in his rooms each day, surrounded by the many intimate reminders of his daily life, served to keep the image, the personality of the man vividly before her. Often it seemed as though he would—must—suddenly appear from his bedroom and begin dictating. At these times he seemed very near to her; she longed to see him, to hear his voice, to touch his hand. She tried to imagine him there with her—his arms about her, his lips on hers, and the effort left her weak and trembling.

At other times, as the weeks rolled into months, she frequently, for days, did not think of him at all, except in the most casual way, and rattled through her daily task, mechanically, without comprehending the words she wrote.

Her feelings toward Chanler during his absence might be roughly divided into three phases: The first, when she longed for him day and night; the second, when she longed for him intermittently; the third, when she scarcely longed for him at all. She wrote him many letters, especially at first, and in her diary she began to set down a jumble of thoughts, disconnected, contradictory; a frank record of the feelings of the moment, the emotional flashes

which irradiated her being, the cold, calculating logic which so frequently followed in their wake. For a time it seemed to her—now that Chanler had gone—she wanted him a thousand times more than when he had been with her. She regarded their coming marriage with equanimity—looked forward to it with joy. Even if she did have to sacrifice many—indeed, most—of the things which riches bring, was not love, after all, a greater possession? It is true that she had many times denied this in the past, but, then—she did not know love.

Her love for him, if love in the greater sense it indeed was, increased sensibly her powers of expression, gave to her thoughts a more poetic turn, to her hand a larger touch. She dipped her pen, as it were, in the hot blood of her youth, and its point was tipped with fire. The night after he left she wrote pages in her diary, pouring out her love, her passion for the man. It seemed somehow to make the thing more real, this concrete expression of her feelings:

"Oh, Grant, my dearest, why did you go away and leave me? I am so lonely. I want you so much—every nerve in me is a-quiver for you—for your man's body—your man's brain. It seems so wonderful the way you have come into my life and absorbed me, mentally and physically—into yourself. No man that I have ever met—not one—has baffled and allured, and tempted and held me as you do. I would not dare to write you that, dearest—I suppose you would think me a perfect fool. But, then, men never know what women think and feel."

"I have been lying here in the dark, for hours, thinking of you—wondering how I shall ever get through all these

long, long months without you. Once I fell asleep, with your face before my eyes, and dreamed—wonderful dreams."

"You *do* love me, Grant. You must. I can't live without you. You do not know what it means for me to say that—after the way I have always laughed at love. If you would come back and take me now, I'd live in a hut with you—and be your slave—if you would only take the trouble to *make* me."

"You went away, binding me to no promises, asking no loyalty, demanding no sacrifices, without even the knowledge that I would be here, waiting for you, when you return. Why? Are you so sure of me?"

"I suppose I ought not to say that, for I know very well that no woman gives those things for the asking. After all, a man would be a fool to try to hold a woman by promises. I give to you what I do because I want to—because some power in you makes me want to. I suppose you knew that when you left me."

"Still, you might have demanded my loyalty—it would have made me happier—not because it would have made me give any more, but because it would have shown me that you *cared*."

"After all, perhaps you *do* understand women. The curse of understanding, I suppose you would call it. Your supreme confidence in yourself amazes me. I suppose it is because women have always poured out for you their best, and besought you to take your fill, grateful if you noticed their offerings at all. You make women the pursuer instead of the pursued. Judging by the way I feel about you, I think you have unconsciously blundered upon some primal law of nature, long since buried beneath the rub-

bish heaps of convention. Woman *are* the pursuers. They always love most the men who treat them with indifference. I suppose it is because we, like human beings generally, want the thing we cannot readily get. I never could love a man who begged me to on his knees. If he turned his back and snubbed me, I suppose I'd want to kiss his hand. Life is quite ridiculous, after all."

"You said once that a man always returns to a woman he wants—to a woman who can make him want her. I suppose that is true, but why place all the burden on me? Don't you want to make me want *you?* Isn't that worth while, too? Must I always be the pursuer? Women like to be pursued, too, Grant. If you forget that you will be terribly surprised some day."

"I haven't told mother. She doesn't believe in love—as I understand it. To her it is a sort of religious thing, surrounded by pretty sentiments and orange blossoms, and talk of marriages being made in heaven. That's just like mother. She believes that every word in the Bible, from cover to cover, is gospel truth, and thinks that it's unlucky to start anything on a Friday. I wonder why I don't feel that way? I know that love isn't sentiment, anyway. It's a terrific, blinding, passionate thing that drives two people into each other's arms just because they can't help it; because, as you have so often said, some bigger force back of them is using them as puppets in a larger game."

"You once told me that I was a pagan, loving brutality in silk, passion on a bed of violets. What is a pagan, after all? I think it must be just a person who has stopped thinking for a while and is content only to feel."

"Some people—two people, like you and me—strike fire.

Why? Is it because of something within us, like tempered steel? Is it because we were meant to? I don't understand. Most people I meet seem like nice, soft pieces of dough, and, of course, you couldn't expect to strike a single spark from dough."

"Grant, you have stripped me to my naked soul—and made a fool of me. I don't seem to think about money the way I did. If anybody were to offer me a hundred million dollars I believe I'd rather feel your arms about me than take it. Is that nonsense, I wonder?"

* * * * * * * * *

She wrote to him almost every day, at first, telling him of her love in a thousand different ways. Some extracts from these letters indicate the change which gradually came over her feelings.

"Wednesday.

"Your knitted silk tie—the one you wore last night—was lying on the couch when I went in this morning—you must have forgotten it. It was so friendly and dear—you are many miles away, but nothing can make it any less—you. There is something in the heavy feel of the silk that stirs me when I touch it, or let it slip down my arm of its own weight—it seems, somehow—elemental—I wonder if you know what I mean? It makes me hunger for your arms, to have you take me in them, kiss me, hold me till I can scarcely breathe."

* * * * * * * * *

"Friday.

"I finished that wonderful first chapter of the book today, dear. How can it fail—how can such a book not

make people think? Some will call it brutal—coarse—but it is true—terribly true. I feel that you are going to make a fortune out of it."

* * * * * * * * *

"Saturday.

"This has been such a dreary, blue day. I stayed at the studio till six—the last hour I spent arranging your clothes. You left things in an awful state. I sewed on seven buttons, which you might appreciate if you knew how I hate to sew.

"Mr. Norton came in while I was doing it. How he did laugh! Dear old Charlie—he is such a good friend. We sat and talked about you for a long time, and then he put me on the subway. I love you more and more, every hour."

* * * * * * * * *

"Monday.

"There is something in the fourth chapter of the novel that I do not quite understand. It is about your character, Brantley, and the love he found in Ellen. It seems as though you thought her milk-and-water affection for him was better than the love Pauline gave. You surely can't mean that, Grant. Pauline was really in love with him. Ellen might as well have been his mother. You don't think love is really quiet and tender, and simple, like that, do you, dear? For if you do, I wonder what you are going to do with me."

* * * * * * * * *

"Thursday.

"Mother and I went to the theatre last night. Mr. Norton gave us the seats. I didn't care much for the play, but the leading man reminded me of you, and just to look at him made me happy the whole evening. He

looked much stronger and healthier than you did, dear, when you went away. When you come back, and the book is a success, we must arrange to go away from New York and travel and enjoy things. Then you will not be worried and troubled all the time. We might go to Florida, or to Morocco. Mr. Norton has been telling me so much about Morocco. He was there, you know, last year. I think I should like Morocco. We could rent a beautiful old Moorish palace and have a splendid time all by ourselves."

* * * * * * * * * *

About the middle of June she got a letter from him, posted at Gibraltar. It made her very happy, for he wrote his love with more of fire than he had spoken it.

She replied, her letter full of terms of endearment. At the close she expressed a hope that they would be able to spend the next summer together, in a cooler place.

In July her letters were less frequent and shorter. The summer was very hot. Every one else seemed to be having such a good time. The papers were filled with pictures, advertisements, news of the various seaside and mountain resorts. Every afternoon, and especially on Saturdays, as she left the studio, she saw the hurrying crowds, baggage laden, rushing for train, steamer or ferry. It made her discontented. The shop windows, however, were a never-ending vision of delight, a vision separated from her by but the thickness of a pane of glass, yet as far removed as the moon. It was one Saturday evening after an afternoon spent looking at priceless lingerie and buying a two-dollar shirtwaist, that she wrote:

"DEAREST:

"It has been frightfully hot here this week. I wish I could go away to the seashore. Think of it—I've never even seen the sea. Mr. Norton has promised to take me to Coney Island, and next week I am going to take a day off and go. I know you would not mind my going with him.

"I have finished Part I of the novel, and have begun on Part II. I shall have it done long before you return. Do not think of cutting short your trip. You need all the rest you can get. Of course, I shall be glad when you get back, dear, but a few weeks, more or less, will not make any difference."

* * * * * * * * *

"Friday.

"I saw Mr. Wiemar on the street yesterday, but he did not see me. I wonder if you would mind if I should go and pose for him? Sundays are such long, dreary days. Mother and I have been to Long Beach twice, but I did not go in the water—I couldn't very well go alone. Mr. Norton has gone to Cape Cod. Every one seems to be out of town.

"Of course I miss you, dear. How can you ask? I think of you every day—and wonder how I can wait until you get back. You need not worry about my health—in spite of the heat I am quite well, and have gained four pounds in the past month. For a time I hardly had any appetite, but mother got me a tonic and I feel much better. We are going to the theatre to-night."

* * * * * * * * *

It was toward the end of July that she got the note from Wiemar. She thought him away in the country, long ago, but he wrote that he had been at Narragansett Pier for a

month, and had come back to town for a while to finish up some work he had neglected. He suggested that she come and see him the following Sunday at five, telling her that he had taken an order to do a special set of magazine covers, and wanted her to pose for the series. His letter was quite business-like, and left the terms to her. Emmy was driven to go by two considerations. The first, and least important, was the thought of the money she might earn, money that would, perhaps, enable her to get some of the pretty things she craved. The second was the fact that she was bored beyond her powers of endurance. Her hot young blood craved excitement, life, and all its varied experiences. Sitting alone at Chanler's studio or in the little rooms at home had become well-nigh unendurable, and as Chanler's personality became less of a reality and more of a memory, she found herself without any sustaining ideal to make the sacrifice of isolation a joyous martyrdom. In truth, passion had waned, and no larger basis of love remained to take its place.

On the day she received Wiemar's letter she wrote:

"GRANT, DEAR:

"Mr. Wiemar has written, asking me to come and pose for him next Sunday, and I think I shall go, as the money will come in very nicely just now. I haven't any clothes to speak of and I really must get some, unless I am to disgrace you. I hope you are having good weather and are enjoying yourself. It is very hot here and very dull. I shall be glad when you get back, but you would be foolish, now that you are in Europe, not to see Switzerland. Some day I hope to see it myself.

"Good-by, and take care of yourself. EMMY."

CHAPTER XI.

It wanted a quarter to five when Emmy entered the big studio building on Gramercy Park and rang for the elevator. Wiemar had written her to come at five. It seemed absurd to be ahead of time, implying, as it did, her eagerness to come, yet it was too late to change matters now. And she *had* been eager to come—Wiemar would never know how long, how dull the day had seemed to her. Her mother had received a letter from Katie the afternoon before, telling her that she and Harvey were preparing for the advent of a son and heir. Katie wrote as though there could be no doubt as to the newcomer's sex. Did not she and Harvey wish it so?

The consequence was that Mrs. Moran spent the entire forenoon telling Emmy how much more sensible Katie had been than she, and how much better it was to be married and settled down than living this hand-to-mouth existence. The truth was that poor Mrs. Moran was bored. She knew scarcely any one in New York, and, in consequence, she spent most of her time in reading the papers and wishing herself back in Gainesville.

Emmy encouraged her to make Katie a visit, to be with her during the critical time. She could get along very well—alone—for a month or two. Mrs. Moran, debating the matter, pro and con, decided it eleven times during the morning. Five times she decided to go, six times not to go. She was wrestling with the problem for the twelfth time, when the clock struck noon.

Emmy hardly heard her, as she talked the matter over, aloud. She was busily engaged in deciding what she should wear on her visit to Wiemar.

The problem of a dress, for this occasion, was one of considerable importance. She had been wearing black, ever since her father's death, out of respect to her mother's wishes, and also because she knew she looked extremely well in it. But black, for a visit to an artist's studio—ugh! She shuddered. It was not to be thought of. Suddenly she had an inspiration. The grey dress of last spring was still in fairly good style. She had not worn it since her father's death. She got it out of her trunk, pressed it, and selected from her slender store a pair of nile-green silk stockings. Her spring hat was covered with faded green ivy leaves. It would do.

She was surprised to find the suit almost too small for her, especially about the hips and bust. Evidently she had grown. She decided that it made the dress appear even more attractive than before.

She called good-by to her mother as she went out, but did not go into the front room. Mrs. Moran would be sure to argue about the propriety of wearing the suit, since it still wanted a month of the full year since her father's death. She disliked argument, and meant to appear before Wiemar looking her best.

He was seated before a small easel when she entered, the door having been opened by a Japanese servant, who at once retired into a rear room.

Wiemar, turning, saw her, and, throwing down his brushes, sprang to his feet. "Miss Moran!" he cried, with an expression of delight. "I was wondering whether you'd come. In fact, I made a bet on it." He came forward and

took her hand, holding it a fraction of a moment longer than was necessary. "Come and sit down."

"A bet?" she inquired, allowing him to conduct her to a deep couch filled with pillows that faced the brick chimney-place. "With whom?"

"With myself." He smiled like a pleased schoolboy. "I bet a cocktail against another cocktail that you wouldn't come. If you hadn't, I'd have drunk them both."

"And now that I have?" She leaned back and regarded him quizzically.

"I'm only going to drink one. The other is for you. Kogo!" he called.

The boy came in with two glasses containing a light-golden liquid, of a slightly opalescent hue, and, placing them silently on the table, withdrew.

Wiemar got up and, taking one of the glasses, handed it to Emmy. "You'll like this," he remarked, as he took up the other. "*A votre santé, Ma'amzelle.*"

"What is it?" she asked.

"An invention of my own. I call it the 'whetstone of desire,'" he laughed. "Try it." He bowed, and she observed that he tossed off the drink in a mouthful.

"How do you like it?" he inquired, as Emmy cautiously sipped the golden liquid.

"Delicious!" She looked at him with her great, translucent eyes. "I suppose you mean it whets your desire for more."

He shrugged his shoulders and flung himself beside her on the couch. "Let it speak for itself," he said. "When are you coming to pose for me?"

"When do you want me?"

"Always!" he darted a look of admiration at her silken ankles.

She laughed. "That would be a trifle inconvenient, wouldn't it? Anyway, I'm afraid I could only come Sundays. You know I'm busy with my work for Mr. Chanler the rest of the week."

"All right—Sundays it is. I engage you now—at whatever price you say." As he spoke he took from her the empty glass and placed it on the table. "Say from eleven —till—till midnight."

"But—you can't work—after dark——"

"But we'll have to dine—and then we can sit here and talk." He paused, looking at her narrowly.

"And do you propose to pay me for—for talking, too?" she asked.

He reached out and took her hand. "For talking—for anything—just for *being*," he said, leaning toward her with an expectant look.

Emmy drew back. "Oh, we haven't begun—yet." She laughed, mischievously, then changed her manner as she saw that he was not in the least discouraged. "Show me your—your pictures." She jumped up and began to look at some sketches on the walls.

Wiemar began to gnaw his mustache. "There's nothing here worth seeing," he growled.

There was a sketchily done portrait of a woman over the fireplace, a woman of a fine type—aristocratic, high-bred—strong. "Who is that?" she asked.

Wiemar looked up, carelessly. "Oh, that's my wife," he said.

Emmy managed to avoid showing her surprise. His wife! She had not known until this moment that he had a wife. She stared at the picture a long while, in silence. "She's a very fine-looking woman," she said, turning to him with a trace of resentment in her manner.

"Yes, everybody says so. Splendid woman. Much too good for me. Pity she ever married me."

"Why?"

"Oh, I suppose I don't understand her—nor she me. I get on her nerves frightfully. You see, I like women—lots of women." He waved his hand about an imaginary circle. "Temperament, I suppose. So many women can give me things—some one thing, some another. I can't pretend that any one woman can give me everything. What's the use, anyway? It isn't true."

"But you—you're happy, aren't you?"

"Happy! Of course I am. Helen gives me a vacation every little while—goes to the country, or Europe, or somewhere. Then I play."

"But, doesn't she mind?"

"No, I don't believe she does. You see, she's very sensible. Some women would make a terrible fuss and smash things up. She laughs and says I'm a joke."

"Then I think she understands you very well."

He flushed. "You mean—that—I am a joke?" he asked, angrily.

"Oh, no, I—I didn't mean that at all; only it seems to me she must understand you if she makes things so—so easy for you."

Wiemar assumed a melancholy air. "After all, who is understood? All my life I've been seeking—seeking. Most of the time we temperamental people," he gracefully included her in his generalization, "are forced to act, to play our stupid parts in the drama of life as best we may. But still we dream of the perfect woman. It may be you—I do not know—but I am always seeking." He took her two hands and pressed them to his breast. "Can't you under-

stand the hunger—the emptiness of it all—the desire for the ideal?"

Emmy felt somewhat confused at this singular recital. "Seeking," she inquired, interested, "for what?" She drew away her hands and sat on the edge of the table, one nile-green ankle swinging restlessly to and fro.

Wiemar noticed it. "How can you ask?" he exclaimed. "Don't *you* feel the heart hunger for the perfect joy of understanding? Aren't your arms weary with longing for the man of your dreams? Love—perfect love—is a blessing that comes to so few of us. How can we help seeking for it—in every face—in every heart—in every soul we meet?"

Emmy thought of Chanler. Her arms had ached for him, it is true, but she felt no such emotion so far as Mr. Wiemar was concerned. In fact, with the unerring intuition of the untemperamental, she suspected him of seeking for something quite different from love.

"I hope you find—what you are looking for," she said.

"And you will help me? Who knows—perhaps the search is already over." He came very close to her.

Emmy slid down from the table and went over to the easel. "What this you're doing?" she inquired.

Wiemar looked at the painting, carelessly. "Oh, that's a portrait I'm making for an old duffer named Ransome—rich as Crœsus, and with the taste of a coal-heaver. However, he pays well."

The picture represented a charming young girl of seventeen, with a clear, sunny smile, and the big, wondering eyes of youth.

"Who is it?" asked Emmy, interested in the picture, she could hardly say why.

"His daughter. She's in Europe, I believe. School

there. I made some sketches before she went, and I'm working up the portrait from them."

"Oh!" Emmy turned away. "Is he an old man?" she inquired, without particular interest.

"About sixty. Widower. Good old sport, too. I've been on his yacht." He smiled, reminiscently. "Lively craft, all right."

"Yacht? How lovely! I'm crazy about the sea." The girl clasped her hands, enthusiastically. "You see, I was born in Ohio—I've seen very little of it—but the—the smell of it, even, makes me want to just draw in a deep breath and run on the beach like a—a——"

"Water nymph," he supplied. "You'd look it, too. How I wish I might paint you—that way. Wouldn't you?" He paused and looked at her, reflectively.

"You—you mean—to pose—without——" she did not complete the sentence.

"Without anything—but the beauty God gave you. I'd give my—my soul—to paint you—like that."

She turned away. "I'm sure your soul is worth much more than that, Mr. Wiemar. I thought you said it was my face you wanted to paint."

"I do—and all the rest of you. Don't misunderstand me!" he cried, as he saw an expression of annoyance cross her face. "I'm an artist. I respond to the beautiful—always. I can't help it. It's my nature. You are one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. Don't blame me if your beauty affects me—if I am filled with a desire to fix it where it cannot change—or fade."

Emmy laughed nervously. She was not insensible to his flattery, but she was, at the same time, quite well aware of its purpose. "I—I'm afraid you'll have to find another model—I'm not the only woman you know who has a good

figure." She took up from a cabinet near the window a heavy necklace of beaten gold, with three great amethysts set in it, and looked at it admiringly. "How beautiful!" She laughingly fitted it about her neck.

Wiemar sprang toward her and quickly fastened the clasp. "It's yours, if you'll have it!" he exclaimed. "I picked it up at an antique shop on Fourth Avenue the other day—wanted it for a picture I've been working on, but I found it wouldn't do. I wish you'd take it."

"Oh, I couldn't do that, Mr. Wiemar!" She made as though to unfasten the necklace, but her fingers somehow seemed unable to loosen the clasp.

Wiemar took her hands and drew them down. "You'll keep it," he said, earnestly. "I want you to have it. Please."

Emmy looked at her reflection in a little mirror with a Florentine gold frame that hung above the cabinet. "Do you really mean it?" she asked.

"Of course I do. I insist upon it. And wear it every time you come to see me. It suits you wonderfully. Will you?" He still held her hands and was drawing her slowly toward him, in spite of her resistance. Suddenly the door-bell rang.

Wiemar wheeled about with an exclamation of annoyance. "See who it is, Kogo," he said to the Japanese servant as the latter entered the room. "And take away these glasses." He waved his hand toward the empty cocktail glasses, then turned again to Emmy. "It may be that old fool, Ransome. He's always dropping in at unexpected hours. Awful bore. However, I suppose one must put one's self out a bit for a millionaire. He won't stay long."

It was Mr. Ransome. He came in, a short, grey-haired, red-faced man, with heavy features and small, twinkling

eyes. He looked the self-made business man, with a neatly tailored and polished exterior, and a shrewd but not unkindly nature within. He bowed to Emmy somewhat awkwardly, as Wiemar introduced him, then began to discuss with the latter the unfinished portrait. Emmy pretended to be busy examining the sketches on the walls, conscious that Ransome was following her movements closely, out of the tail of his eye.

Presently, their discussion being over, Wiemar rang for his man and ordered more cocktails. Emmy put hers aside, unnoticed. Ransome continued to watch her with undisguised admiration. "Model?" she heard him inquire of Wiemar. The latter's reply she did not catch, but she thought Ransome appeared pleased at its tenor. She approached the two, as they stood before the painting. "I'm afraid I must be going, Mr. Wiemar," she said. "I—I'm expected home for dinner."

"Oh, no, don't go yet!" Wiemar was plainly annoyed.

"I really must." She moved toward the door. "I'll come again—some time. Good-by." Her hand was on the knob.

"Are you going far, Miss—Miss Moran?" Ransome asked.

"To Eighty-first Street." She began to turn the knob, her glance drooping slightly toward the older man. Wiemar glared at the latter's back and made signs to Emmy to remain.

"Let me take you along with me. My car's downstairs," said Ransome, turning quickly to Wiemar, who wore an expression of complete disapproval of the suggested arrangement. "Good-by, Wiemar. I'll come in again in a few days." He grasped his hat and followed Emmy through the door. She, on her part, had made no reply

to his offer. She was doing some very rapid thinking. "Good-by, Mr. Wiemar!" she cried, again, waving her hand to him gaily. "I'll come next Sunday—if I can." The elevator was just descending. She stepped into it and Mr. Ransome followed her.

The latter's car, a big, yellow affair, stood snorting before the door. Ransome handed her in without further parley. "Must you really go home—now?" he inquired, as the chauffeur turned to receive his orders.

"What time is it, Mr. Ransome?" Emmy asked, with a pretty assumption of timidity.

"Quarter to six. It's early yet. Why not go for a spin through the park and then—take dinner with me."

She looked up at him, with a confiding glance, her eyes mild and untroubled. "Perhaps—if—if I might ask mother——" she paused, apparently irresolute.

Ransome was charmed. Such innocence—such delightful modesty in New York—New York of 1911. It seemed too good to be true, and yet—her eyes—clear as a child's, her complexion, unmarred by a single tell-tale line, reassured him. "Of course you can. I'll ask her myself." He patted her hand in a fatherly way. "What's the address?"

She gave it, and they went whirling uptown at a great rate.

"You haven't been in New York long, I judge, Miss Moran?" Ransome asked, with a smile.

"No, not very; only—let me see—seven months." She counted them off on her fingers, like a pleased child. "I feel that I'm quite a New Yorker now."

Ransome smothered a laugh. From the pinnacle of his knowledge of the great city—collected at vast expense along its gay white way for the past twenty years, he felt like some aged seer, at whose feet sat Youth, ready to be

taught—what? What could he teach this young girl—what would she permit him to teach her? That, indeed, was the secret joy of the quest. Could he pin this butterfly among his already large collection? There was always a chance of failure. There was also the chance that the hunter might himself be snared, but that possibility did not occur to Mr. Ransome. The untroubled pools of Emmy's eyes were too clear and virginal to hold any snares which could entrap a wise old bird such as he knew himself to be.

Half an hour later, Emmy having spoken to her mother and powdered her nose, they stopped before the restaurant near Madison Square at which she had dined with Chanler shortly before his departure for Europe.

CHAPTER XII

The restaurant was only partially filled, at this early hour, and they secured a table overlooking the Avenue. Ransome seemed to be well known to the employees of the place. The hat-and-coat man called him by name, as did the smiling head-waiters. This seemed to please him vastly. Emmy saw him pass one of them a bill.

Their progress across the room was the signal for the usual remarks, not always inaudible, by the other diners. Ransome, although not in evening dress, radiated an intangible atmosphere of wealth. Emmy carried herself like a goddess. The subtle atmosphere of the place acted on her like wine, giving a new color to her cheeks, a new carriage to her head, as though to say—here is where I rightfully belong. Most of the men in the place envied Ransome his good fortune, the women envied Emmy. Both, across their tables, whispered comments upon the "girl with the green eyes." They voted it another case of the same old thing. Many of them knew Ransome by sight. He dined there frequently—generally with a different woman.

When they had taken their seats, Ransome ordered two cocktails. He did not consult Emmy, seeming to take it as a matter of course that she would acquiesce. She determined to establish a definite basis with him at once. Drinking cocktails with Chanler, or Wiemar, or Norton was well enough—but here was a man with a million—

several of them, perhaps. It was essential that she should meet him upon less unconventional grounds.

The waiter brought the cocktails, while Ransome was diligently studying the menu. He ordered quickly—surely—without consulting Emmy's wishes, for which she inwardly thanked him. Then he raised his glass. "Here's luck!" he said, and drained it.

Emmy pushed the cocktail to one side. "I—I don't drink them," she said, with a pretty show of embarrassment. "I don't think it's wise—for a young girl to drink cocktails—do you?" She gazed at him, her expression one of demure innocence.

Ransome looked at her quickly—keenly. Was this a pose? He knew women—certain types of women—well. "Don't you drink anything?" he asked, a shade of disappointment in his voice.

"Oh, yes, sometimes. I—I enjoy a glass of wine occasionally—champagne, that is—or, perhaps, a little claret, but I rarely take more than one glass."

Ransome appeared relieved. "That's good," he grunted. "Very sensible. Cocktails play the devil with one's digestion." He turned to the waiter. "Another Martini," he ordered, then looked at Emmy and laughed. "I'm used to them," he said, "though my doctor tells me I'd better cut them out."

"Why don't you, Mr. Ransome?" she inquired, softly, with a look of tender interest. "Surely you'd better—if your doctor advises it."

He pierced her with another quick, doubting glance. Was this girl acting—trying to come it over him with the baby stare? His eyes fell upon the amethysts about her neck, glowing richly in their dull-gold setting.

"That's a beautiful thing," he said, leaning over and inspecting the necklace. "Never saw handsomer stones."

Emmy raised her hand gently to her breast. "Yes," she said, in a slow voice. "I prize it very highly. It—it belonged to my great-grandmother."

'Indeed!" Ransome was duly impressed. "You—you are from the West, are you not?"

"How did you know that?" Her tone indicated wonder at his perception—there was in it a subtle suggestion of flattery.

"Oh, I—I guessed it—from your accent. Aren't you?"

"Yes. My father was a well-known brick manufacturer in—in Gainesville, Ohio. He died last—not long ago, and —and left mother and myself with—with very little. We came here to live, so that I might have an opportunity to—cultivate my voice. Meanwhile, I'm working to help out. Father's estate was not very large. He was so generous. Poor father!" She applied a lace-edged handkerchief daintily to her eyes.

Ransome appeared touched. "It's hard, isn't it, for a girl to be obliged to earn her own living—especially in this town?" He glanced about the room, with a comprehending smile.

"I—I like New York," Emmy ventured. "I've met such nice people—they've been so kind."

"Do you know Wiemar very well?" he inquired, with sudden suspicion.

"Oh, no! I was only introduced to him a short time ago. You see, I'm Mr. Grant Chanler's secretary—he's a writer, you know"—she paused.

"Never heard of him," growled Ransome.

"He's written quite a good deal," Emmy went on. "He's a friend of Mr. Wiemar's, and he introduced him

to me. Mr. Wiemar asked me to come to his studio—to pose—just my head, you know." She blushed prettily. "I'd never been there before to-day. He seems awfully nice."

"You'd better let Wiemar alone. "He's—well, he's too fond of women."

Emmy looked at him with big eyes. "You—you mean he's not a—a gentleman?" she inquired.

"Oh, I don't say that, but you'd better let him alone, just the same. He's married, you know."

"Yes, he told me so. From what he said he doesn't seem to be very happy."

"Happy!" Ransome laughed shortly. "He's as much in love with his wife as he'll ever be with any woman.. All the rest are just inspirations."

"Yes, that's what he said I was, an inspiration."

"Well, you'd better not try the rôle. He'll squeeze you dry, like an orange—and throw you into the street."

"Oh, Mr. Ransome!" A gentle little shudder went over her. "I—I'm afraid I don't just understand."

Again Ransome became suspicious. She was playing a daring game. "Don't try to, then," he said, drily, and fell to eating his soup.

It was along toward the end of the roast that Emmy, surveying the room carelessly, saw a familiar figure approaching her. She could scarcely believe her eyes. It was Jim Borden, immaculate in evening clothes. He came toward her—smiling with unassumed delight. "Why, Miss Moran!" he exclaimed, bowing over her hand. "This *is* a pleasure." She introduced him to Ransome. The two men surveyed each other coolly, then Borden turned to her again. "How is your mother?" he asked, solicitously.

"Mother is quite well. She'd be delighted to see you."

"Where are you living now?"

"On Eighty-first Street." He took out a gold pencil and made a note of the number she gave him.

"There's a 'phone?"

"Oh, yes! Twenty-two four hundred, Columbus." He added this to his notes. "How long are you going to be in town, Mr. Borden?" she went on.

"Until Thursday. I'll call you up—and perhaps you" —he flicked a glance at Ransome—"and your mother might like to dine with me."

"She'd be delighted. Poor mother! We have so few friends in New York, you know."

"Not much like Gainesville, is it? I see your sister, Mrs. Cook, occasionally. I'm not at home as much as I used to be, though. Washington, mostly."

"Washington?"

"Yes. I'm in Congress now. Didn't you know?"

"No. Really!"

"Oh, yes. Had to do it—nobody else wanted to. I find it rather good fun." He appeared to regard the matter as somewhat of a joke. "I'll ring you up before I leave town—to-morrow, perhaps. So glad to have seen you. Good-evening. Good-evening, Mr. Ransome." He joined a merry party at a distant table.

"Good-looking fellow," Ransome remarked.

"Yes, isn't he? I'm quite fond of Mr. Borden, though I seldom see him now. He's one of our most prominent citizens at home. An old friend of ours."

The incident seemed to afford Ransome further food for thought. He did not speak for several minutes. Presently they fell to talking about himself. Emmy diplomatically directed the conversation into that channel, and

found him quite willing to follow it. He told her of his great coal business in West Virginia, how he had started as a common miner and had, by luck and hard work, reached the top. A small sum left him by an uncle he had invested in coal and oil lands. When the railroad was put through his property he found himself rich. At thirty-five he had married a girl from Pittsburgh, and he had one child, a daughter, Janet, now at school in Paris. His wife had died fifteen years before, and he found himself very lonely. His country place on Long Island he had closed. His town house was rented. He kept bachelors' quarters at one of the prominent hotels, and amused himself as best he could. His one hobby was yachting, and he spent most of his time, during the summer, on board his yacht, the Redwing. He'd called the boat this, after the mine. No doubt she had heard of Ransome's Redwing steaming coal. No? Well, most people had, who knew anything about the coal business. He was giving a little party on board his yacht the following Saturday—luncheon and a sail up the Sound to New Haven. Wouldn't she like to go along?

Emmy thought she would. She had never been aboard a yacht, and she longed for the experience. "I'd just love it," she cried, gaily, "if mother approves."

"Why shouldn't she? I'll expect you. The Redwing is anchored off Twenty-fourth Street—I'll call for you—in my machine, and take you down to the landing."

She was delighted, and showed it, and her youthful enthusiasm gave him a new sensation. The women he went about with usually made it a point to appear bored on all occasions. "Here's to a happy day, my dear!" He raised his glass and touched hers, looking into her eyes. The wine had begun to make him feel young again.

Emmy flashed one of her rare glances through him. "And many of them," she added, daringly, drinking her wine with a charmingly unsophisticated air.

Ransome was delighted with her, but he was too old a hand with women to believe entirely in her innocence, in spite of her apparent simplicity. In common with all men who came within her influence, he desired her, as he might have desired a beautiful piece of ivory, or a priceless painting, had his tastes run in such directions. He believed her purchasable, at some price, but he was puzzled to determine what that price would be. Needless to say, he determined to find out. All women were puzzles to him. He tried to solve them—indeed, found his chief pleasure in life in trying to solve them. He was not always successful, but that only lent added interest to the game.

They prolonged their dinner until after nine, and then drove out to Claremont in Ransome's car. Here he ordered more champagne, but Emmy would have none of it. The lights on the river, the soft night air, the music, the people, all interested and enlivened her—she needed no artificial stimulation, as he did, nor would she have indulged in any, if she had. Perhaps if Mr. Ransome had known exactly the thoughts which were passing through her comely little head he might have reconsidered his plans for the following Saturday.

He took her home at eleven and left her at the door of the apartment. Emmy said good-night, with just the gentlest pressure of her hand, and went up to talk with her mother.

Mrs. Moran was lying in bed, wondering what had become of the girl. She had never quite become reconciled to the thought of having Emmy stay out at night.

The habits of twenty years could not be so easily broken. Until the past year not a night had passed but she had seen her daughters safely in their beds before she had sought her own.

Emmy had little to say. She told her mother of Ransome, and their dinner together. Of Mr. Borden she said nothing.

"I hope he is a gentleman," Mrs. Moran said. "These New York men are so wicked—so dangerous."

"No men are dangerous, mother," Emmy replied, "if you understand them. Good-night."

On her table she saw a letter to Chanler which she had begun in the morning but had not finished. She took it up, read it through, slowly, then tore it into fragments and dropped them in a little shower into the waste-basket. Then she drew out her diary and began to write. The first line was: "Poor Grant, I'm afraid I'm not going to marry you, after all."

CHAPTER XIII

On Monday morning, Emmy received a large box of candy from Mr. Ransome and a telephone call from Mr. Borden, who asked her to dine with him. He said nothing about her mother being one of the party, and Emmy knew that he had mentioned it the night before only for Mr. Ransome's benefit. He referred, jokingly, to his former promise to show her the sights, and seemed extravagantly eager to have her join him. Emmy, wise beyond her years, declined, with thanks, pleading a previous engagement. She knew that Jim Borden was a confirmed bachelor, that it was not his intention to marry any one, and that he was, therefore, unlikely to be of any great benefit to her. Upon her refusal he suggested the following evening, reminding her that she at least owed him the pleasure of her company for a few hours. There was a veiled threat in this, which made Emmy angry, the more so, perhaps, because she knew that her actions on a previous occasion had justified it. She became increasingly discouraging, refused to commit herself, but suggested that he might telephone again in the morning. She could almost hear him swear as he snapped the receiver back upon the hook.

The following day Mr. Ransome sent her a great box of American Beauty roses and a note asking her to go to the theatre with him that evening. Borden did not telephone. Both events pleased her mightily.

The evening was a great success. The play, a musical

comedy, Emmy found highly entertaining—the supper afterwards, at a noted Broadway restaurant, a new and delightful experience. There was but one discordant note —one fly in the ointment. She had no clothes. All about her were women in bewildering costumes, gorgeous jewels —all the extravagances so usually the offspring of much money and little taste. Emmy, in her home-made *crepe de chine*, felt that she looked old-fashioned and plain. Ransome, surfeited with garishness, thought her delightfully simple and unaffected.

He came again on Thursday, to take her to lunch—and on Friday night dragged her off to a roof garden. He appeared infatuated with her—under the spell of her eyes, her unspoiled naturalness, her physical charm, he was happier, more youthful, more freed from boredom than he had been for years.

All this time the man studied her intently, trying to determine exactly what was her game—he believed all women to be playing a game—but she baffled him at every turn by her apparent innocence. On Friday night, when he left her, he knew no more of her thoughts, her intentions, than he had known in the beginning. All he did know was that he desired her more than he had ever desired a woman in his life.

Promptly at noon on Saturday he appeared at the house, in his car, looking very smart in his blue-and-white yachting costume.

Emmy, realizing the importance of the occasion, had done some careful shopping during the week, with the result that Mr. Ransome had no reason to feel ashamed of his guest. White shoes, a stylish white linen suit, a Panama hat with a gay scarf about it, a veil and parasol made the girl look so stunningly beautiful that people

paused on the sidewalk to gaze at her as she entered the car, and Mr. Ransome fairly beamed with proprietary pride. Mrs. Moran, peeping through the blinds at an upstairs window, did not know just what to think, and sat for a long time in the shadowed room, wondering how it was all going to end. She wished herself back in Gainesville, with Katie and the friends of her youth.

Emmy's outfit had cost her ninety dollars, but she was a gambler by instinct, and it consoled her to think that considerably over half of the life insurance money still lay untouched in the bank.

The Redwing was an English built boat, schooner rigged and very roomy and comfortable. Emmy regarded, with eager delight, her shining black hull, polished brasswork and immaculate decks, holystoned until they glistened in the hot midday sun. The water of the river sparkled incessantly, and a cool, fresh breeze swept from the Sound. Under a striped awning, aft, big easy-chairs, on a bright-colored rug, surrounded a wicker table on which stood glasses, decanters, siphons and a cut-glass bowl of ice. A white-coated steward stood at attention near the companionway.

Ransome conducted her over the boat, pointing out the merits of the craft, in nautical terms, which Emmy did not in the least understand. Presently he took her below, exhibited the saloon, the several staterooms, and, indicating one of them, told her it was for her use while on board. Then he left her.

Emmy, presuming this to be quite the proper and nautical thing, entered the room and looked about admiringly. She thought the place, with its brass bed and Circassian walnut furniture, the most charmingly beautiful little room she had ever seen. Its rich velvet carpet

sank softly beneath her feet. Its little dressing-table made her long to fix her hair. She took off her hat, smoothed down her shining bronze locks, left her parasol on the bed and ascending to the deck, ensconsed herself comfortably in one of the easy-chairs under the awning.

Yachts of various sizes were on all sides. Over at the landing several fussy tenders were awaiting their passengers. Among these she descried that of the Redwing, with Ransome's squat figure seated forward. Presently a taxicab drove up with a flourish and two people, a man and a woman, got out. Ransome waved to them, and they got into the boat. In a few moments they were on board.

The man was tall, light, red-faced, and had once been handsome, but his good looks had long since been submerged in a sea of alcohol. He was introduced as Mr. Wilcox. The woman, she learned, was a Mrs. Haines. The two seemed entirely at home on board, and at once called for highballs.

Mrs. Haines was a handsome woman—not over twenty-eight or thirty, Emmy concluded, but her beauty was of a reminiscent sort and seemed to exist in spite of her past experiences rather than because of them. She was perfectly gowned, and excellently made up—so well, in fact, that even in the noonday glare Emmy was not at first certain where nature ended and art began. Her manner was easy and unconcerned. She regarded Emmy with evident curiosity.

Mr. Wilcox seemed very merry. He hummed continuously a queer, monotonous air, and addressed Ransome as "old chap." Emmy decided that he must be English. He did not pay much attention to her—his interest being divided between the highballs and Mrs. Haines.

The four of them sat about the table, laughing and

talking, while the yacht got under way. Ransome had insisted on Emmy's taking a highball—she did not refuse to do so, not wishing to have him think her a prude, but she sipped it very cautiously and left most of it in the glass.

Mrs. Haines was inclined to be very agreeable and communicative. "Not a bad boat, this," she said to Emmy, as the two men strolled forward, smoking. "About like the one my first husband had. He was a member of the Manhattan Yacht Club, you know. My second didn't go in for yachting—nor my third, either. It seems good to be on the water again."

Emmy looked at her, astonished. This arithmetical way of referring to one's husbands was new to her. Mrs. Haines observed her questioning glance.

"Oh, perhaps you didn't know—I've been married three times—and divorced, too. Thinking about a fourth right now. Gets to be a habit—this thing of marrying. Of course, I don't expect anything more from my next venture. Men are all alike—you can't trust them. But I suppose I'll go right on—to the end of my days." She took a powder-pad from her vanity-box and dabbed at her nose. "I imagine you haven't tried it yet."

"No. Not yet." Emmy gazed out over the water to where the countless cross streets came down to meet the shore. "I don't think I'd care about being divorced."

Mrs. Haines seemed mildly amused. "Quite the usual thing, nowadays, my dear. Only way a woman can keep her reputation. Of course, we all get tired of men, sooner or later, and it wouldn't be good form just to—well—just to leave them. And, besides, there's the question of alimony. I don't know what I'd do without my six hundred a month, four hundred from number one and two hundred

from number two. Number three hasn't a dollar to his name. The panic of 1907 cleaned *him* out. But he was a good spender while it lasted."

She extended her beautifully shod foot and gazed at it reflectively. "Life is a queer proposition, isn't it? Men want us, and pay for us, and then they want somebody else, and perhaps we do, too, but they have to keep right on paying, just the same, for what they've had. I don't know that it's exactly fair, but it's the law." She nodded in the direction of the forward deck where the two men were walking, arm-in-arm. "Wilcox is a decent sort—drinks a lot, of course, but, then, you can't expect everything. We hit it off very well. How about you and Ransome? Anything doing?"

"I—I think Mr. Ransome is a very pleasant man," stammered Emmy, in some confusion.

"Plenty of money, anyway. Takes his fun where he finds it. Make him pay for it, my dear. He'll think all the more of you. I tell you, you've got to be careful nowadays. Men are getting to believe that all they have to do is to buy a woman a set of furs and she's theirs. Make them pay the price—that's *my* advice. Now, take Mr. Wilcox. He can't get along without me. We're going to be married in October—just as soon as my last decree is made final. Then we're going to Cairo—Japan—around the world." She smiled at Emmy, knowingly. "There's nothing to it, my dear, nothing at all. Take a tip from me—make Ransome pay—he's able to, God knows. Wasting his time all these years on a bunch of cheap actresses. Marry him. Then you've got him. You won't have any trouble. He's crazy about you. She winked cautiously as the two men rejoined them.

"Have another highball." Ransome's voice was a trifle

loud. All the others began to pour out fresh drinks. Emmy took nothing. "What's the matter, dear?" inquired Ransome. "Why don't you get in the game?"

"I—I don't care for whisky."

Ransome called to the steward. "Bring up a couple of quarts of Ruinart," he ordered, loudly.

"But I—I don't really care for anything, now." Emmy's voice held a note of apprehension. "I'm not used to drinking, you know, Mr. Ransome."

She heard Mrs. Haines say something to Ransome behind her hand. She caught the words—"What is this—a bluff?" Mr. Wilcox looked at her, solemnly. "My strength is as the strength of ten," he hummed, "because my heart is pure. Champagne, my dear young woman, is the greatest gift of the gods. Look not a bottle of Ruinart in the face, for does not the Good Book say, 'Take a little wine for the stomach's sake'?" He raised his glass. "Ha! ha! my spirits begin to rise. What ho! said the mate. Fill up the gap with our English dead. Here's to the maiden of blushing sixteen—here's to the housewife of fifty—here's to the——" he stopped and fixed his eyes solemnly on Emmy. "Woman—woman, thy name is legion. Always fifty—never one. My dear—to your wonderful eyes." He gulped down the drink, then rose and walked unsteadily forward. "Come along, Ransome, old boy!" he cried. "Let's leave the ladies to tell each other what rotters we are."

Ransome kept his seat. He seemed to avoid Emmy's glance. She did not quite understand Mrs. Haines and her companion. The former was calling Ransome's attention to a wonderful ring she wore—a scarab, set in heavy gold. "Just think, Mr. Ransome, I've worn that ring through

three marriages. After all, material things last longest. Pretty, isn't it?"

Emmy sat back in her chair, half dozing. The conversation of these people did not interest her. She was drinking in with a hungry soul the delights of her surroundings. They had passed Execution Rock light, and were now in the broad Sound, headed east. The breeze of the afternoon had stirred up a tumult of short, choppy waves, which broke in masses of creamy white foam against the yacht's sides, without in any way affecting her steadiness. They were running now at over sixteen miles an hour, and the girl sank back into her luxurious seat, feeling that to her *this* life was real; that *here* she belonged; that all else had been but preparatory to her time for coming into her own.

At half-past one they descended to the saloon and a deliciously cooked luncheon was served. More wine was ordered, and Emmy observed, with some dismay, that not only Mr. Wilcox and Mrs. Haines, but Ransome as well, were beginning to show the effects of it. There was no particular intimation, except a slight boisterousness, a raising of the voice, a certain lack of steadiness in movement, but she wondered, if this went on, what the condition of the party would be by night. Almost she began to wish she had not come.

It was almost four o'clock when they again came on deck, and Ransome informed her that they were just passing Bridgeport. Away off to the left she could see a clutter of buildings along shore, topped by a plume of smoke. A crawling train on the shore line, looking like some child's toy, moved imperceptibly in the direction of Boston.

Mrs. Haines and Mr. Wilcox strolled forward, and with the aid of a number of pillows made themselves comfortable

against the starboard anchor, where they were quite hidden from view.

Ransome sat under the awning, aft, droning out long-winded tales of his cruises and adventures aboard the yacht. Emmy, in her comfortable chair, hardly heard him as he talked on. Once or twice, under the spell of the sea air, the motion of the boat and Ransome's monotonous voice, she found herself nodding sleepily.

Dinner was served at seven o'clock and, like the luncheon, was delicious, from its clam cocktails to its Benedictine and coffee. Emmy did full justice to it—for the salt air had made her hungry. Afterwards they went on deck and sat about in the dark, talking indifferently of the weather—the evening.

Mr. Wilcox seemed bored. Presently he walked forward with Mrs. Haines and they disappeared in the gathering darkness.

Ransome drew his chair close to Emmy's and settled himself nervously. Presently he reached over and took her hand. "Let's go below," he said, quickly. "The night air may give you a cold."

Emmy looked at him curiously. "I love it," she said. "I'd much rather stay here."

Ransome pressed her fingers, his face twitching with suppressed excitement. "Come on," he said, "let's go below. I want to show you my stateroom."

Again Emmy swept him with a curious glance. "What do you mean, Mr. Ransome?" she inquired, coldly.

"I mean that I want you." He leaned over and grasped her wrists. "Wilcox and Mrs. Haines have gone below. We're all alone here. Come." He rose and tried to draw her toward the companionway. "Don't let's waste our evening sitting here. Come with me. It'll be all right,"

he urged, noting her resentment. "I'll pay the price, whatever it is." He leered at her amorously.

Emmy drew away from him. "I don't understand you, Mr. Ransome," she said. "I'm quite comfortable where I am."

"Oh, come on. Don't be a fool." He again grasped her arm and attempted to drag her from the chair. Let's make the most of our time. We'll have to turn back soon."

Emmy struggled to her feet, white with anger. It infuriated her to think that he should estimate her so cheaply, especially since she had given him no reason for doing so. He misinterpreted her intention in rising, and threw both arms about her, striving to press her to him. She wrenched herself free, and, picking up a heavy glass decanter from the table, faced him. "If you touch me again, Mr. Ransome," she said, her voice trembling with rage, "I believe I'll kill you!"

Ransome drew back, with an oath. Then he stopped. "You beauty," he said, rapturously. "You beauty," and regarded her in admiring silence. Certainly she was a striking picture, her hair disarranged, her cheeks flushed, her eyes flashing in the half light. Something in the fighting blood of the man, some responsive chord, was struck by her tiger-like defence of herself. Suddenly she let the decanter slip from her grasp onto the table, and, flinging herself into a chair, buried her face in her hands and burst into tears. Undeniably it was the psychological moment. Bernhardt herself could not have played the scene better. Nor by this is it to be understood that Emmy was acting. Her tears were tears of disappointment, rage. She feared that Ransome was now lost to her forever.

In this she made a pardonable mistake, underrating her

own charms, as well as their effect upon Ransome. The man was dazzled by her beauty, inflamed by the wine he had drunk, and he desired her greatly. Her defiance had stirred his love for a good fighter, her tears brought him contritely to her feet. Here was a new type of woman, he felt, not to be so easily won. The greater her resistance, the greater his determination to overcome it. It was characteristic of him, in this, as in business, and accounted for his success.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Moran," he said, and leaning over, placed his hand upon her shoulder. "I—I'm sorry."

She sobbed a moment longer, in silence, then raised her head and looked out over the water to where the lights shone on the distant shore. "Mr. Ransome," she said, "I—I like you very much—very much. I thought you were a gentleman. I—I want to continue to think so." He reached over and took her hands in his. "I'm just a poor, defenceless girl, but I'm not that sort. I depend on you—I have put myself in your hands." She clung to him, appealingly. "If we were—if everything were all right—I—I would be so happy—so happy"—she trembled on the verge of tears. "But to think that you would insult me." She dropped his hands, and taking her tiny handkerchief from her lap put it to her eyes. "And I trusted you so."

Ransome was overcome with contrition. "I—I didn't mean to insult you," he stammered.

"But you have, Mr. Ransome. I had begun to think so much of you—more than—than of any man I've ever known. You seemed so honorable, so fine, so strong. I've never met any one that I thought so much of. I hoped we were going to be such good—friends. And now, after what you've said—after what you've done"—she was

unable to continue, and, putting her hands to her face, wept convulsively.

Ransome stood for a long time in silence, gazing at her. He was thinking rapidly—going over in his mind the events of the past fifteen years. At bottom he was a man of simple tastes—of rugged honesty. The mercenary women who had been his companions along the gay white way had begun to disgust him. He knew that they endured him only for what they could get out of him. Here was a woman, simple, innocent, knowing nothing of the world, and he had but to say a word to possess her—to have her for himself alone. She had made him care for her—desire her—love her—yes, he did love her, he concluded, as he swept her with a searching, yet tender, glance. He did not see that Emmy, the innocent, the simple, the unmercenary, was observing him intently between her fingers as she pressed them to her face to hide her sobs. He flattered himself that he was an unerring judge of women. The man who thinks that is a fatted calf, ready for the slaughter.

He reached his decision, went up to Emmy and taking her wrists drew her hands away from her eyes. "Miss Moran," he began, "Emmy, I—I ought not to have said what I did. You have made me want you more than I have ever wanted any woman in all my life. I love you—I love you! Will you forgive me?" He leaned toward her, exhaling a strong odor of champagne. "I'm a rough old fellow, Emmy, but my heart's in the right place. I want you in my life, always. Will you marry me, dear?"

Emmy sat back in her chair, with a jolt. Marry him—marry this funny little old man, with his millions? She could not at once gather her wits to reply. Her hesitation but spurred him on.

"I'm lonely—lonely," he went on. "I'm tired of all this sort of thing. There's nothing in it—nothing at all. I want you—dear—to be with me always. Tell me you love me—that you will marry me." He leaned over and fixed his small, grey eyes on her anxiously. "Tell me. Will you?"

"Are you quite sure you want me, Mr. Ransome?" she asked, coldly. "I am not a fortune-hunter. I work for a living. I'm not sure I want to marry anybody."

"Of course I do. I can't live without you. Ever since I met you I've thought of nothing else. Promise me you will be my wife."

Emmy leaned toward him, her body yielding to his searching grasp. She felt his arms go about her shoulders. "Oh, Mr. Ransome, I'm only a little girl!" she gasped. "Will you promise to be good to me?"

"I promise to make you the happiest woman in the world!" he cried, drawing her to him. "I promise to love you, and care for you, and guard you all the rest of my life. Emmy, dearest, you *will* marry me?"

"Yes!" she cried, softly, and snuggled into his arms.

CHAPTER XIV

It was Ransome's wish that he and Emmy should be married in September. Emmy placed no obstacles in the way of this plan. She only hoped everything might be over before Chanler returned. She had kept very much to herself since the night aboard the yacht, going each day, as usual, to the studio, although she had long ago finished the work he had left her to do. She went because Chanler, on going away, had paid her for three months in advance, and she felt that she must do something to earn it. So she got out a great mass of uncompleted stories from his desk and copied them all out carefully. She had another motive in doing this. Ransome insisted that she should go away from the city at once, to some resort where she could rest and get sea air. Much as she wanted to do so, she refused. She knew, if she went, that it would be at Ransome's expense, and she was not willing to let him spend money on her in any such way before her marriage. It savored too much of charity, and might cause him to think less of her. So she refused, claiming complete independence of action until after the wedding. It impressed Ransome very favorably, as she expected it would.

She found two glowing letters from Wiemar at the studio—he did not know her home address—begging her to come again and see him—asking her to dine with him—to lunch with him. She showed the letters to Ransome, and by doing so proved to him both her worth in this other

man's eyes, and her childlike honesty in taking him, her fiancé, into her confidence.

Toward the end of August, Mrs. Moran left for Gainesville, to be with Katie, and as Mr. Ransome was called to St. Louis to attend a meeting of the underwriters of a new traction company in which he had become interested, Emmy was left quite alone. She busied herself in getting together her trousseau.

The balance of the life insurance money had been drawn upon heavily, even before Mrs. Moran went away to Gainesville. Emmy spent with a lavish, yet discriminating, hand, and poor Mrs. Moran looked on aghast as her daughter selected dresses, hats, shoes and lingerie fit for the bride of a millionaire. She spent over a thousand dollars, and still got far short of what she desired. "We've won, mother!" she cried, as she calmly ordered a seventy-five-dollar hat. "Mr. Ransome shan't think us paupers. There's over four hundred dollars left in the bank. You take that, when you go home, and buy a lot of pretty things for Katie and the baby. From now on you're going to have everything you want."

In moments of less enthusiasm she was troubled about Chanler. At times he seemed very near, very dear to her. Sometimes she caught herself longing for a sight of him, for the dear, familiar tones of his voice, for the pressure of his arms about her, for the touch of his lips. But these moods came only at intervals. The great future opening before her took up most of her thoughts. She still wrote to him; even after her engagement to Ransome she wrote affectionately, but she was very careful not to express her thoughts in any way which might later on compromise her.

She was not sure, from Chanler's replies, whether he

had observed the difference in her or not, but it was quite apparent that while time had served to cool her ardor, it had increased *his*. Perhaps it was due to the different causes from which their affection for each other arose. Emmy wanted a man—Chanler, a wife.

Many times she made up her mind to write to him about her coming marriage, but somehow, when she set her hand to the task, the words would not come. She felt that it would be so much easier to tell him—she knew he would not accept a letter from her as final, but would hasten back, to argue with her—plead with her—endeavor in every way to make her change her mind. And this she by no means wanted him to do. Now that she had promised to marry Ransome, she wished no influences about which might interfere with her plans.

Chanler had told her, when he left, that he would be away three months. His health, he felt, demanded that he take at least that long a rest. The three months had now passed and the last letter she had received from him, written from Interlaken, gave her no hint as to the time of his return. It would be just like him to surprise her, she thought, and made herself ready for the ordeal.

Grant Chanler, nerve-racked and ill, left New York with only a confused idea of the fact that he and Emmy loved each other. He was on the verge of nervous prostration, and was incapable of reacting to even so stimulating an experience as the knowledge and realization of their mutual love. The long voyage to Naples, however, drove the wrinkles from the corners of his eyes and relaxed the tension of his overstrained nerves. In a week he was eating prodigiously, and sleeping like a child. In two weeks he began to look about on life, and no longer viewed through dun-colored glasses, he found it full of promise.

All the deep-seated hope, the temperamental optimism of the man rose buoyantly to the surface. His book, he felt sure, would bring him fame and fortune; the short stories, placed with his agent before he left New York, would sell as readily as in the past, and at better prices. He strode about the decks with shoulders erect and eyes sparkling, ready to face the world in any aspect. In other words, he had begun to get well.

At Naples he found several letters from Emmy, which had come via Paris and Milan. They set his love aflame. He would have given everything he possessed to have had her with him on this trip, to have wandered with her, hand-in-hand, through Sorrento, Amalfi, Capri, Rome, Florence, Venice and the Alpine country. Every word of her first letters seemed resplendent with the glory of her love for him, and his heart beat tumultuously as he read them.

The fact of her absence, however, he did not allow to spoil his trip. He felt that his whole future depended upon his returning to New York, to his work, to Emmy, strong and well, ready to fight the fight of his life for success and for her. As the days of their separation grew longer, his love for her increased. Like all temperamental people, he idealized the object of his thoughts until it seemed to him that Emmy was the most beautiful, the most glorious woman the world had ever known. Into her letters he read a thousand shades of meaning, of which she herself had never dreamed. She became the constant subject of his thoughts, and as returning health sent the blood racing through his veins, he missed her, her physical presence, more and more. In his imagination he strained her to his breast and kissed her lips as he had not kissed them on the day they had declared their love. That occasion he pictured with a contrite mind, with feelings

almost of shame, that he, in his illness, his devotion to his work, had not realized her great love for him until he had forced it from her at the last moment, by his chance questioning. But for all that he would make amends when he got back. She would have no cause to complain of his ardor, then.

It was at Lausanne, to which place he went after leaving Interlaken, that Chanler got a batch of delayed mail that had been forwarded through his bankers at Paris. There were three letters from Emmy, and he tore them open, not, however, until he had placed them in the order in which, judging from their post-marks, they had been written. He always did this, when receiving several letters from her—so that he might read her thoughts as she had written them.

The first letter began "Dearest boy." Emmy had written it in a delightful hour at the studio, full of recollections of another hour but a few weeks before. It was very loving and sweet. The second letter, written at home the night after her meeting with Ransome, began "Grant, dear," and was full of vague and troublesome allusions to the future, and to the importance of his work over and above anything or anybody else in the world. The third letter she had written three days after Ransome had proposed to her. It began, "Dear Grant," and was almost sisterly in its well-modulated solicitude as to his health and welfare.

After all, whatever we may write, or not write, there inevitably creeps into our letters some reflection of the state of mind in which they are written. Try as we will, choose our words as carefully as we may, there still clings to them an intangible something, the very essence of our

mental state, which, to the discerning, the intuitive speaks louder than the written words.

Chanler felt this as he let the last letter drop into his lap and gazed out of his window to the blue waters of the lake. Something had happened, of that he was sure. He determined to return to New York at once, and since he could travel as fast as a letter, and there seemed no object in cabling, he sent Emmy no word.

His steamer arrived at the dock late in the afternoon, just as the flaming disc of the sun was dropping below the black sky-line of Jersey. It was after eight o'clock when he at last got through the customs; he did not stop to telephone, but dashed into a taxicab and drove to his rooms. Here he deposited his baggage and then, without taking time to glance through the pile of letters and papers on his desk, hurried to the subway and started uptown.

Emmy, about the same time, tired of sewing, not wishing to go out alone, had thrown on a kimona and lay stretched out on her bed, reading a magazine.

Chanler did not know that Mrs. Moran was out of town. He did not feel at all sure of finding Emmy at home, but he did expect to find her mother, and it was his intention to speak to the latter, in case he found her alone, to talk with her about Emmy and their coming marriage. He remembered, now, that in his hurried departure from New York he had never so much as given poor Mrs. Moran a thought. As the moment drew near upon which his heart had been set for over three long months, he could scarcely contain his impatience. He dashed up the flight of stairs which led to the second floor of the apartment, and in a moment was ringing the bell at Emmy's door.

The girl, engrossed in her book, did not at first hear it. Then she rose, with an exclamation of impatience, and

going to the door opened it a few inches and peered out—and directly into Chanler's face, dim lit by the single electric light in the hall. For a moment she did not recognize him; then, in her amazement, forgetting her disordered hair, her clinging kimona, she threw the door wide and haltingly bade him enter.

Chanler, overjoyed at the sight of her, stepped quickly into the room, closed the door, and in a moment had clasped her in his arms. Emmy had a momentary vision of his bronzed face, his flashing eyes, and then all was blotted out in a rain of kisses.

As she was to men, so was this man to her. No other man had ever appealed to her as he appealed. The strength of his embrace, the ardor of his kisses, the breath of health and vitality about him, beat down her impotent resistance, and, forgetting Ransome and all else beside, she yielded herself to him in a burst of passionate joy. It seemed to her, thrown off her pedestal of worldly wisdom by the primitive appeal of his virility, that she had lived through all these hot, weary months just for this moment. Exhausted by the violence of her emotions, she lay in his arms, trembling.

Chanler was the first to recover. "Emmy!" he cried. "Emmy!" and held her off by the shoulders, that he might feast his eyes upon her beauty. In the stress of his embraces her kimona had been torn open at the neck, disclosing her round throat, her heaving bosom. She clutched the shimmering silk about her, blushing furiously.

"You—you surprised me!" she gasped. "You—you must wait until I dress." She turned toward the bedroom door.

"Don't think of it, dear. You look lovelier just as you are than in all the clothes that were ever made." He

gazed at her longingly, then again drew her to him. "I thought I should never get back to you—the days on the steamer seemed like eternities."

"It—it has been long," she stammered. "Why didn't you let me know?"

"Well, you see, Emmy, I got your last letter and I didn't like it. It seemed, somehow, as though you were forgetting all about me, so I just made up my mind to come and see for myself. Now I know that everything is all right."

She put one hand uncertainly to her forehead, pushing at her hair, and with the other grasped the back of a chair. A terrible fear began to creep over her. How could she ever tell him—how could she ever tell him the truth?

In his joy at seeing her again, he failed to notice her agitation. He threw himself upon a couch and drew her down beside him. "Isn't it wonderful, dearest," he said, "to be with each other again?" then kissed her until her brain reeled, and she was obliged to beg him to stop.

She sat still, not daring to speak—inwardly thanking her stars that Ransome was out of town. At the thought of him her eyes swept to a jar upon a nearby table in which a great cluster of roses reared their gorgeous heads. Chanler, unconsciously following her glance, also saw the flowers, and a little silence fell between them.

"How is your mother?" he asked, at length.

"She's well. She's gone to—to Gainesville, to be with my sister. She's expecting an addition to the family." She laughed nervously, mirthlessly.

Chanler again looked at the roses. They seemed to burn into his brain. He knew their worth—he knew that Emmy had never bought them for herself. "Aren't they beautiful?" he ventured.

She rose, and going over to the flowers smelled them, hiding her burning face in their cool, velvety petals. "Yes, aren't they? Mr. Ransome sent them to me."

"Mr. Ransome?" His voice, usually so low and well modulated, rose with his sudden irritation. "Who's Mr. Ransome?"

Emmy saw that the time had come to speak. "Grant," she said, "you must not be angry because of what I'm going to tell you. Mr. Ransome is the—the man I'm going to marry."

Chanler started up with a cry. "To marry! Emmy! What—what do you mean?"

"Just that, Grant. You know I—I did not promise to marry you. I *have* promised to marry *him*."

"But," he looked at her, bewildered, "why—why?"

She glanced down at the roses. How could she tell him that? He came up to her and grasped her wrist. "Why are you going to marry this man? You said you loved me."

"I do—I do!"

"Then why don't you marry me?"

"Grant, I—I could never make you happy—you have your work—you have a hard enough time to get along as it is. I couldn't be an added burden to you—we should be happy for a few months—a year or two—and then—poverty would take all the enthusiasm out of you—all the happiness out of me—we'd end by hating each other."

He gazed at her, curiously intent. "Is—is this man rich?" he inquired.

"Yes." Her voice was so low he could scarcely hear it.

"And you don't love him?"

"Oh, no, no, no!" The words tumbled from her quivering lips. He saw her moisten them with the tip of her

tongue. "I don't love any one but you." She threw out her arms to him, twining them about his neck."

"And still you are going to marry him?" he asked, his voice stern—menacing.

"Yes. Oh, Grant, don't look at me like that. Grant——" She clung to him wildly, lifting her face to his.

He pushed her from him. "Then get away from me," he muttered.

She resisted him, clinging to his arms. "Oh, don't—don't, Grant! Kiss me—you know how I love you—how I want you."

"Love me!" he cried, bewildered. "And you are going to marry some one else? Good God, Emmy, what do you mean? You must not let this man come between us. You've *got* to marry me."

"I can't. Oh, Grant, don't you see? He can give me everything I want, and—I've promised. But that doesn't make me love *you* any the less."

He trembled now. With her eyes, her lips, her bare throat, her whole body, she appealed to him. He caught his breath and looked at her, hungrily.

"Emmy," he cried, "Emmy, you don't mean to do this thing—you can't?"

"I must. I've promised him. We're going to be married in September. I'm going to sell myself to a rich old man just for his money. I suppose you will despise me, but I can't help it. I've *got* to do it. I—I'm in debt, and I—I never could be happy without money."

"The poor old fool!" Chanler flung at her, bitterly.

She flushed at his tone. "After I marry him I'll stand by my bargain, but now—now, oh, Grant, Grant," she clung to him eagerly, hungrily, "I want you—you!"

Chanler stood looking down at her, like a man dreaming. The cold-bloodedness of her intention chilled him. She did not see the hardening lines in his face, and, with her arms about him, held him close.

"You mean," he said, slowly, "that you are willing to give yourself to me—now—until you are married?"

She raised her face to his, her cheeks flushed, her eyes closed, not daring to speak—to look at him, and awaited his kisses.

He threw her off. "Good God!" he muttered, and strode over to the window. "Good God!" He repeated it softly to himself, as though unable to comprehend what she had meant. "And you call yourself a virtuous woman?"

"You know I am!" she cried, with sudden anger.

"Technically speaking, no doubt." He laughed wildly. "Oh, I want you—God knows I want you. I wanted you to marry me. But I'm not going to hand you over to this man any less virtuous than you are now. If you've made up your mind to sell yourself to him, at least give him a fair return for his money."

His bitter laughter cut her—lashed her pride. "Is he giving me virtue?" she asked, the flush dying out of her cheeks.

"Certainly not. He's giving you a few millions. That's his part—a few millions. *You* supply the virtue." He laughed again, loudly—stridently. "God! what sort of a woman are you, anyway?"

"I'll tell you what sort of a woman I am," she cried. "Every man I've ever met, almost, has wanted me, tried to get me—ever since I can remember. I suppose there's something about me that makes them feel that way. I found out, long ago, that all they wanted was to buy me, with anything they could, from a plate of ice cream to a

million dollars. I made up my mind when I sold myself it would be for the million dollars—that's why I agreed to marry Mr. Ransome. It's all very well to talk about love, but when you come right down to it, it's you—your body they want. It doesn't make any difference what else you may have—that is the first consideration—with every man."

He regarded her with a contemptuous smile. "You're mad," he said. "I wanted you to marry me."

"And so does Mr. Ransome. You wanted just what he wants, no more, no less. You offer me love, so does he—but he has a million dollars—several of them—you haven't."

"Stop!" he cried, furious. "Haven't you dragged our love through the mud enough—without saying that to me? And to think that I believed you loved me."

"I do. You're the only man I've ever met that I wanted to have kiss me—that made me feel. Grant! I—listen to me—if I should *not* marry Mr. Ransome—if I should promise to marry you——"

He turned away, impatiently. "God!" he muttered. "God!" and went toward the door.

She still clung to him, trying to detain him—pulling him down to her—shameless in her passion. "Grant—dearest Grant—kiss me!" she cried. "Kiss me!"

Chanler turned toward her and grasped her wrists. It took all his strength, even now, to resist her, but she had degraded him, his love, to the level of a common intrigue, and to him it had seemed his whole life. "I wouldn't marry you now," he cried, "if you were the last woman on earth—not now. I thought you a good woman, but, by heaven, you have the soul of a prostitute!" He threw her violently from him and she fell on the couch, her bare

bosom heaving, her body shaking with sobs. He did not even turn his head as he passed through the door.

Emmy lay on the couch for a long time, longing for him, hating him in the same breath for his scorn of her—for his greater strength. She did not realize that it was love that had made him strong.

The thought that she would, in all probability, never see him again made her wild with desire for him. She called up the studio, frantically, only to learn that he had not yet returned. She thought of dressing—of going to him, but feared his biting scorn. At one o'clock in the morning, when the telephone in his apartment still failed to reply to her frantic calls, she sat down and dashed off two hasty notes—one to Chanler, telling him she would marry him; the other to Ransome, breaking her engagement. Having done this, she feared to post them. She decided that, in any event, it was too late that night to post them. She tore them up, rewrote them, and once more tried the telephone, only to be informed by the hall-boy that Mr. Chanler had not yet come in. No doubt he was making a night of it, consoling himself with drink. Clearly, there was nothing that she could do—now.

After a long while she rose from her desk and crept into bed. She felt terribly lonely—more lonely than she had ever felt in her whole life. It was hours before she fell asleep.

CHAPTER XV

Emmy awoke the next morning considerably refreshed in body and spirit. She still longed for Chanler, but the thought of Ransome's money and all that it would mean loomed larger than it had the night before. Still she decided to speak to Chanler—to hear, at least, what he had to say—to suggest that they have another meeting.

It was then nearly noon. She felt sure that Chanler would be in. When she succeeded in getting the studio building on the telephone she was informed that he had gone out of town; that he had left an hour before, without either saying where he was going or when he would return. She suddenly found herself helpless.

After a hasty breakfast she picked up the two letters she had written the night before and read them over and over. As she was doing so a boy arrived with her daily box of roses. Slowly she tore the two letters into tiny bits and, piling them upon a plate, set fire to them and watched them, fascinated, as they crumbled to grey dust. Filled with self-pity, she thought of it as the funeral pyre of her love. Then she opened the box of flowers, rejoicing in their cool, fresh beauty. Decidedly, Emmy was a pagan.

The following Monday, Tyler Ransome returned from St. Louis, chuckling over a successful deal, which had netted him a hundred thousand more than he had expected. He called Emmy up and took her to lunch at the Plaza.

Over their liqueurs he tossed her a pale-green slip of paper, with a big, red certification across its face. It was a check for $50,000. "You brought me good luck, girl," he said, beaming upon her like an elderly and kind-hearted satyr. "Half the trimmings are yours."

Emmy thanked him with real feeling. She had been very blue since that ghastly night with Chanler; the knowledge that the only thing approaching love that had ever entered her life had gone from it with a malediction, left her in desperately low spirits. Chanler—no longer a possibility, she now perversely longed for, even more than she had while the situation was still hanging in the balance.

The check proved a veritable balm. Fifty thousand dollars! It was a small fortune. Whatever happened to her now, she would always be sure of a living—she and her mother. The latter came as an after-thought, but Emmy, with all her mercenary outlook on life, was still too honest with herself not to realize that only through her mother had this good fortune been made possible.

"Buy yourself a diamond tiara," she heard Ransome saying, jovially.

"I don't think I want a tiara," said Emmy. "I shall be quite happy without it." She gave him a quick, caressing glance that amply repaid him for his generosity, then looked at the check, doubtfully. "In fact, I don't think I ought to take it at all." The actress in Emmy was speaking now. She knew perfectly well that he would only insist the more.

"Nonsense!" He took up the check, folded it into a small square and placed it in her fingers. "Put it in your purse and forget it."

"I shall never forget it." Her voice was very sweet and tender. "You are very good to me—very, very good.

I shall put the money away—some time you—you might need it."

He laughed—the idea tickled him. He, Tyler Ransome, whose fortune increased so fast that he could scarcely keep track of it; whose stocks, bonds and other investments ran heavily into eight figures. "Need it! Why, my girl, it's a—a drop in the bucket—a flea bite. Spend it as you like—the prettier you make yourself the prouder I shall be of you."

She realized that he thought she might need it for her trousseau, and the thought annoyed her. "I have bought all my things already—all that I shall need for the present."

"Really?" He seemed surprised. "I—I didn't know you had a fortune of your own."

His heavy humor displeased her. "I'm not quite a pauper," she said. "I at least do not expect you to buy my clothes until—until after we are married."

The thought of their marriage, now so near at hand, made him forget the reproof in her tone. "Only a week now, Emmy. I've had the house at Elmwood done up like new. Mrs. Holmes has engaged a batch of servants—it's beautiful down there in the fall. We'll spend a couple of weeks there—or longer if you like—all to ourselves. Then we'll take the Redwing and go for a cruise to the Mediterranean. Nice—Monte Carlo—Naples—Cairo—Japan if you like. End up at Paris about April. Won't that be great?" He fairly beamed in anticipation. "Then we'll get Janet—my daughter, you know—Jane we named her—and bring her back with us."

Emmy was delighted with the prospect. After all—love—the love she had felt was a soul-racking experience, likely to burn out and leave one but a fallen rocket—with

only its one heavenward flight to cheer the long, ageing years. What Ransome offered her meant luxury, travel, everything, in fact, that she had always desired. She thought of Katie, struggling to make ends meet, on Willow Avenue—of Chanler, grinding out his soul for a few wretched dollars, and shuddered. Life was giving her just what she had asked of it, and she had no wish now to withdraw from the bargain.

Ransome had been making arrangements for the wedding. He had no near relatives, except his daughter, who could not, of course, be present, and a sister of his dead wife, whom he cordially hated. There were a few friends, men mostly, who would, perhaps, want to come—these, with Emmy's mother, would comprise the wedding party. Emmy decided not to invite any of her Bohemian acquaintances. She would have been glad of Norton—but he was Chanler's friend, and she feared his presence. After all, she was entering a new life. The curtain had gone down finally upon the old order of things. Old friends could mean nothing to her now, so she begged Ransome to have the affair very private, two or three of his closest associates—her mother—and suggested the Little Church Around the Corner.

Ransome was glad of her seeming timidity. Blunt, not over refined in his ideas, he fully realized that his social position in New York, in spite of his yacht, his country estate, his millions, was nil. A big church wedding would make it necessary for him to invite a raft of mere acquaintances, who would come only to stare, to criticize and, perhaps, secretly to laugh. He hated them, one and all, because they only tolerated him and flattered him when his money could be of use to them. It was his belief in the sincerity, the absence of all mercenary motives in

Emmy, that had caused him to ask her to marry him. Her beauty, her vitality, had appealed to him powerfully, but for that alone he would not have made her his wife. At sixty, one has seen much of womankind, and is apt to discount mere physical charm when questions of marriage are concerned.

It was arranged that Mrs. Moran, immediately after the ceremony, was to return again to Gainesville and make her home with Katie. The new addition to the family—a boy, Emmy learned—would require her mature experience for some time to come—at least so she and Katie thought, and Harvey's opinions in such matters were, of course, quite unimportant. Emmy intended to present her mother with a check for $5,000—100 per cent. upon her investment, and also to make her a regular allowance. Mrs. Moran's presence in the Cook household as a paying guest would be a help to the family exchequer; they were all quite delighted with the arrangement. For some time they had come to regard Emmy as a being beyond their sphere in life. The girl had been growing insensibly apart from them for a long time. Mrs. Moran's feelings were not unlike those of a little brown hen who has unexpectedly hatched out a beautiful bird of paradise.

At last the fateful day arrived—a golden September day, warm and soft and full of melancholy. Emmy was quiet, subdued, quite different from her usual vivacious self. Ransome sent his car for her and her mother and met them at the church. He had ordered a huge bunch of lilies-of-the-valley for her, but Emmy wore only a few orchids. In her soft grey gown and demure little hat that showed its cost only in its exclusive design and rich material, she was far removed from the flamboyant creature that some of Ransome's friends, who had not met her,

imagined her to be. She held her head high, with the air of one to the manner born, and those who had come to criticize found their weapons turned aside and offered their congratulations in all sincerity.

A small collation had been arranged for at an exclusive hotel on the Avenue, and after that the happy pair entered Ransome's limousine and began the run to Elmwood.

Ransome was in a jovial mood. He had drunk more champagne than was good for him, although not enough to show itself other than in a slight reddening of the face, and an excessive amorousness which made him hold Emmy's hand, and when, later, the car was flying over the smooth Long Island roads, insist upon embracing her with prodigious fervor.

After all, it was the bridegroom's privilege and Emmy suffered it in silence. Somehow she had not until this moment realized how completely she had given herself into this man's power. She was his—he had told her so a dozen times during the past half-hour—his to do with as he pleased.

His kisses left her cold—she remembered with a blinding flash of agony the heaven-sent bliss of her last meeting with Chanler. Then she set her teeth and crushed her emotions in a grip of steel. What this man was to give her she must pay for, and now that the bargain was made she would pay—pay, with no thought of the things she had given up. After all, life was only a question of a bargain. She resigned herself to his eager, covetous arms.

At Elmwood there was a royal supper, to which neither of them did even scant justice. Ransome suggested that the inspection of the house be deferred until the next day, and dismissing his housekeeper and the maids abruptly after learning that Emmy's baggage had already arrived,

took her by the arm and led her up the broad stairs. There was a suite of rooms along the front of the house which Ransome had had especially prepared for their use. Emmy's boudoir and sitting-room were over the great hall, and from it opened off her bedroom, resplendent in Louis Quinze furniture and decorations. Beyond this was Ransome's bedroom and dressing-room. He drew her into the boudoir, threw his arms about her, showered her face with kisses, then left her. "I'll be back presently," he said, with a smile, and retired to his own apartments.

Emmy went to her new steamer-trunk, which lay open upon a low, wooden stool in the bedroom, and groped about in it mechanically. It was the only thing in the room that belonged to her—to her other life, and it seemed more friendly, somehow, than the rich furnishings about her. She drew out a wonderful lace *robe de nuit* which she had bought the week before, and as she did so there tumbled out her worn and much-thumbed diary. At the last moment, in the hurry of packing, she had found it on her table and had thrown it into the trunk. She opened it and looked at the last thing she had written in it, nearly two weeks before. "Grant—Grant—I want you so much—I want you so much." The page was covered with little spots. She remembered now that she had wept when she wrote the words. She threw the book impatiently upon the bed, and, slipping off her clothes, got into her night-dress. She heard a sound, as of some one stirring in the next room. She had almost forgotten Ransome for the time being. Now she realized that in a few short moments he would be knocking impatiently at her bedroom door. She glanced at the diary. He must never see that, she thought, and crushed it in a nervous grasp.

There was a driftwood fire burning in the tiny grate in

the boudoir. The September nights held a suggestion of chill, and the hot-water heat had not yet been called into requisition. She stepped quickly into the boudoir, and threw the diary into the mounting flames, then fell into a great soft chair and watched the book whiten and crumble into a formless mass.

A knock—quick, impatient—made her shiver. She rose and turned to the door. As she did so she cast a last look at the diary, now flying up the chimney in tiny bits, like feathers. All the past she felt went with it. Henceforth she would write in the book of life. She entered the bedroom and slid back the bolt of the door, then crept into the bed and drew the covers, protectingly, about her. "Come in!" she said, in a low voice.

The door opened. Ransome, in a suit of purple pajamas, stood in the doorway, looking for all the world like some queer little old gnome. As she saw him a look of terror came into her eyes. "Oh!" she cried, in a frightened voice. "Please put out the lights."

CHAPTER XVI

Mrs. Tyler Ransome, seated on a marble bench on one of the terraces surrounding the Casino at Monte Carlo, was a picture of unusual beauty and charm. Owing to the fact, however, that she had been waiting for her husband for nearly half an hour, a somewhat petulant expression marred her otherwise attractive features.

The day was warm, although in the month of February, and the sweet-scented wind which swept across the lazy Mediterranean scarcely served to ruffle its placid surface. There was a suggestion of the tropics, of burning African sands, in its warm touch that made one forget the snow-covered peaks to the northward. The wind at Monte Carlo, like one's luck at the tables, has a way of shifting about, blowing hot and cold, chilling the soul, or causing it to expand joyfully, like some rare exotic flower. To-day was one of the golden days when the Riviera seems like a foretaste of the Elysian Fields.

Emmy watched the Redwing as it dipped its polished bowsprit to the faint ground swell, and wondered why on earth Tyler was so long in joining her. She strained her ears impatiently for the faint pop-pop of the gasoline launch which would bring her lord and master to her side.

It must not be inferred that Emmy's impatience arose from any inability to endure a half-hour away from her husband. On the contrary, she could have endured a much longer period of separation with perfect equanimity, in spite of the fact that but five months had elapsed since

she and Tyler Ransome had been married at the Little Church Around the Corner. Her impatience arose solely from the fact that she was bored. Sitting here with no one to talk to on this delightful morning was well-nigh unbearable. She wanted to go about—to *dejeuner*—to try her luck at the tables later on—to do anything but sit on this stupid bench and wait. And knowing no one in all Monaco save only her husband, she was forced to depend on him entirely for an escort.

Tyler, who had had a little streak of luck at roulette the night before, had celebrated unduly, and was engaged in sleeping off the effects. Emmy, her youth still an undrawn-upon bank account, had risen with the sun, and after moping about the decks of the yacht for what seemed hours, had come ashore, ostensibly to buy some gloves, in reality to get away from the dulness of her surroundings.

The world and its experiences were, to Emmy, still fresh, and full of a delightful novelty, but to Tyler Ransome they were a twice-told tale. He had reached an age when one is as a general thing content to sit back and look on while a younger generation plays the game of life. Now that he was married, the domestic side of his nature had undergone a surprising development. He had played the fool, when he was thirty years younger, to the best of his ability, and, in fact, had kept on playing it until very recently. Since Emmy had come into his life he was quite content to adopt the virtue of satiety, the simplicity of the surfeited, and rest, so to speak, upon his laurels.

It is needless to say that this was by no means Emmy's attitude toward life. Steeped in luxury, the luxury of her dreams, her every wish gratified, she found herself forced to think up new methods whereby she might procure from

life that which she felt it owed her. That it owed her much she fully believed. Had not all that she possessed been bought and paid for dearly? Had she not sacrificed all the priceless joys of love in order to become the wife of Tyler Ransome and his millions? She had not arrived at a point where she was willing to admit that her bargain was a failure. In some book, which she had recently read, it was laid down as a fact, beyond question, that the property basis for marriage was a far more intelligent and stable one than that of mere love. Certainly, in Emmy's case, it had eliminated all unpleasant things, save only one—the fact that she was bored. This fact, however, had begun to loom very large upon her mental horizon. If one is sick one may see a doctor; if hungry, eat; if sleepy, sleep; but what on earth is one to do when one is bored?

When a woman arrives at this state it usually means that she is not having a romance—a love affair—and wants one. Although she did not know it, this was precisely Emmy's state of mind. Ransome, as a human check-book, was a success—a grand, perfect success; as a lover he left infinities to be desired. Her physical experiences with him, his kisses, his caresses, not only failed to interest—to amuse—to delight her; they had become positively repugnant to her; only by constantly thinking in terms of limitless money was she able to endure them.

At such times she would long for Chanler, with a keen remembrance of the hot joy of his kisses. She did not regard this feeling for him as passion, she called it love. She thought it was love, because she did not feel the same way toward Ransome, and supposed that had it been passion alone, she would have felt it for any male creature—for all men alike. She did not realize that passion is more

cruelly selective even than love—that out of twenty women a man may, perhaps, be able to love five, and experience a real and lasting passion for but one.

So she imagined that she loved Chanler because she passionately desired him, and as, for the moment, she desired no other man, she placed his memory upon a little altar in the dim recesses of her heart and thought about him most sentimentally. In a recent copy of the Paris edition of a New York paper she had seen his name, among other Americans, at a reception given by a well-known artist in Paris. It made her long for him doubly to know that he was so near to her.

That there might exist a love between a man and a woman, greater than mere physical love, although embracing it, greater because it embraced all else besides—friendship, companionship, mutual hopes, ideals, unselfish service—she did not as yet understand.

Now that she had unlimited money she looked about to see what, in the way of pleasure, she might buy. So far, her purchases had consisted of some rather showy jewelry and some very well-designed gowns, but this was only nibbling at the very outer edge of the pie.

They had left New York early in October, after the honeymoon spent at Ransome's place on Long Island, and ever since they reached Gibraltar, some two weeks later, had been slowly "doing" the shores of the Mediterranean. At first it had been gorgeously interesting. Emmy was like a child just out of school. She bought imitation Moorish antiques and fresh figs at Gibraltar, saw the tarantella and the Cave of the Dogs at Naples, visited Capri, Pompeii and Vesuvius, spent a week in Rome looking at endless churches, ruins and statuary; bought rugs at Constantinople at higher prices than she would have paid in New

York; saw Cairo, as tourists usually see it, from the terraces of Shepherd's Hotel, and, in fact, had been looking at life, of diverse sorts, all these months, without in any way being a part of it. Now that the novelty had worn off, Emmy grew tired of standing on the side-lines, as it were. She longed to get into the game.

At best she was a poor sightseer. It is true that beautiful villas, charming views, royal palaces or Bedouins in gorgeous trappings all interested her deeply. Whatever was painted in vivid colors, in strong tones, whatever smacked of wealth, of the nobility, appealed to her highly colored nature. She could almost imagine running off with an Arab chieftain, but for the fact that life in a tent was likely to prove a disillusionment. But the half-tones of the picture, the old and faded things, the things of the common people, meant nothing to her. The picturesque slums of Naples she abhorred. The ruins of the Forum she found tiresome. The Acropolis, ghostly in the moonlight, she barely glanced at. At Venice she greatly admired the rich Byzantine decorations of the Church of St. Mark, as well as the many shops around the *Piazza*, but the cold beauty of the great rooms in the Doge's Palace left her unmoved.

The Riviera, Monaco in particular, she thought delightful. What she really meant was that, with some one to go about with whose outlook on life was the same as her own, its possibilities for amusement were enormous. But to parade about heavily with Tyler, to go through long, solemn meals at the Restaurant de Paris, to sleep away the lovely afternoons, or to spend the evenings playing a very modest game at the tables (Tyler discouraged any other sort, for her at least), was dull beyond words. Life did not laugh with Emmy. She heard laughter in the

distance, it is true, around unseen corners, in shady nooks, but she, alas! had no one with whom to laugh. She basked only in the golden smile of middle-aged prosperity, and she longed for the hilarious joys of youth.

Perhaps it was some such train of thought which caused her to look up as a tall, distinguished-looking man passed her. He was about thirty-five years of age, but he might have been fifty, for all one could judge from his well-groomed exterior. His mustache, light and slightly drooping; his closely-cropped hair, his brick-red complexion, his erect and well-set-up figure—all bespoke the military man. His clothes, obviously of English make, suggested both wealth and fashion. Emmy thought that never in her life had she beheld a finer specimen of the opposite sex.

He, although he devoted to Emmy but the flicker of an eyelid, the most casual turn of the head, was equally impressed. He vowed Emmy the most jolly-looking little woman he had seen in a twelvemonth, by Jove! and spoke of her, afterward, to George Lennox, whom he presently joined for a breakfast, beginning with a brandy and soda and so on, through Chateau d'Yquem to Benedictine and coffee.

Lennox, who was by way of being a writer and knew everybody and everything, told him who Emmy was. The Redwing had not been anchored in the harbor a week for nothing. "Wife of an old chap named Ransome—Tyler Ransome. Good old duffer. An American. Met him at the club the other night. On his honeymoon, I understand. Wife's a beauty, isn't she? I imagine she's bored stiff, but you never can tell about these American women. Too bad she isn't a widow, Alfred, old chap. You always were strong on widows. They say the old boy has millions. Getting to be the usual thing among Americans, nowadays.

Only the billionaires are really distinguished any more. Mere millions are getting to be as common as tuppenny tarts."

Alfred Charles Allington, son of the Earl of Wroxeter, twisted his mustache thoughtfully. "Doocid bad luck she isn't a widow, I must say. Helen tells me it's my only hope—to marry money. God knows, I've never been able to make any myself." He helped himself to another glass of the Sauterne. "Why is it, George, that money should be so infernally hard to get? Just because one needs such a lot of it, too. What a pity the pater isn't a brewer instead of a peer. I'd come in for something more substantial than a taste for French wines and Irish terriers. Eh, what?"

Emmy had slanted a momentary glance at the handsome Englishman, and turned her eyes with virtuous resignation toward the immobile Redwing, upon whose decks there was as yet no sign of movement. Life, she thought, was, after all, a queer thing. Her craving for luxury, for money, for all the good things of life had been satisfied. All the spectres of poverty, of deprivation, of doing without, which had haunted her youthful days, had disappeared. Position, wealth, travel, jewels, clothes, servants, all the delightful things she had so avidly craved, had come to her at a wave of fortune's wand, and now her cup of desire had proven to be but a sieve, through which all these things had passed, leaving it as empty as before. It is true that in passing through they had fallen into her lap—her cup, indeed, was like that of the beggar supplicating alms. Always, it seemed empty, in spite of the coins dropped into it by the passing crowd, for its owner dexterously emptied the contents into his well-filled pockets and still begged for more.

She had just begun to find that desires, once satisfied,

are desires no longer. Now she craved life, love, youth and all the joys of its unfettered existence, and she found that she had Tyler Ransome, and that in possessing him she could possess only the things which he gave her. There was love, so-called, of a rather tame, flat and unsparkling variety, like corked wine, and the pleasures of a domestic isolation. Her mind harked back to Grant Chanler—for a blighting moment she wished she had married him, after all. Then she glanced at the diamonds on her slender fingers, the Paris creation she wore, the distant yacht, and shuddered. Why could she not have what she already had and the other desirable things of life as well? Of course, as long as Tyler lived she would be obliged—here the pop-pop of the launch broke in upon her reveries. She arose and walked slowly toward the main entrance. It was there that her husband was to meet her.

Emmy observed him some distance off as he came puffing toward her. How fat he had grown during these few months of ease and rest on shipboard! He had never been even a passably handsome man. His small, shrewd eyes, his heavy face, his thin, coarse hair, his stocky build, bespeaking in every line an early life which had known intimately both hardship and physical toil, rendered him the very antithesis of the elegant-looking Englishman who had claimed her attention so short a time before.

When she met him she was on the point of blaming him because of his delay, but he did not give her an opportunity to voice her feelings. Instead he began to complain of the headache which still annoyed him, and the necessity for eating a breakfast which he did not want.

During the course of this meal Ransome referred to his daughter, Janet, as he had several times done during the past few weeks. He wanted to see her; he wished that she

were with them. He, too, had begun to feel a lack of other companionship, and naturally his thoughts turned to his daughter.

Emmy suggested that he should take the train to Paris and bring Janet to Monte Carlo. The fact that the girl's studies would not be completed for some three months yet she brushed aside as immaterial, arguing that the experiences of travel which the girl would get if she joined them would be more to her advantage than a few more weeks or months spent over her French or painting. In her desire to have Janet join them, Emmy was by no means unselfish. In addition to her natural curiosity to see the girl and make her acquaintance, she realized that the addition of a third member to the party would render more easy the making of the new acquaintances which she so greatly desired.

Ransome at first did not take kindly to the suggestion. He wondered what Emmy would do, left alone in Monte Carlo. He seemed to feel that without him she would be unable to exist. She had spent a good deal of time in making him believe this, hence his feelings in the matter were perhaps but natural. She assured him that she would be able to get along very well; that the trip need entail an absence on his part of but a few days, and that during this time she could make herself very comfortable on board the boat. She expressed a keen desire to see Janet, and pointed out to him how necessary and desirable it was that she and the girl should become acquainted, should learn to care for each other, now that they were to spend so much time together in the future.

Ransome listened to her arguments with a not unwilling ear. He had not seen his daughter for over twelve months, and he was more fond of her than of anything in the world,

including even Emmy, although he did not admit this to himself. At last he decided to start for Paris that evening.

"We can stay here in the Mediterranean," Emmy said, "for another month, and then go on to France and England. If you think business will make it necessary for you to be back in New York in May, it would be much better to have Janet join us now and get some benefit from the trip, rather than wait until it is just time to return."

"Yes, I suppose it would," returned Ransome. "I hope you two are going to like each other. I am sure you will. Janet's a sweet girl—a good deal like her mother," he added, with a far-away look. "Doesn't look much like her, though, nor like me, either, for that matter. You remember the picture Wiemar did of her, don't you? It's a good likeness. She's a very innocent girl, you know; hasn't seen anything of the world at all yet. You'll have to be a mother to her, I guess."

"Let me see," asked Emmy, smiling to herself, "she's eighteen, isn't she?"

"Yes. She'll be nineteen in August.

"I'll do my best," said Emmy, looking up at him quickly, a faint smile just touching the corners of her mouth. She was barely twenty-one herself. The thought of playing the part of stepmother to a girl less than three years her junior seemed, somehow, rather amusing.

Ransome looked up trains, sent a telegram to Janet announcing his coming and then suggested that they go into the rooms and have a try at the tables. Emmy thought she would not play. She was tired of staking five-franc pieces on the red or black. She stood behind his chair for a time, watching him make a number of bets with indifferent success. Ransome's method of play was characteristic of his bulldog pertinacity in other directions. If he con-

ceived the idea that a certain number was going to win he would continue to play this number for hours, regardless of his losses. Of course, when his chosen number did turn up his profits were large, but, in the meantime, watching the game became somewhat tiresome. Emmy's gaze wandered off to a little group of three on the other side of the table. To the left was the handsome Englishman whom she had observed in the grounds in the morning; to the right, another man, also evidently English, whom she had not before seen. Between them sat a very smartly dressed woman of some thirty-five years of age, handsome, in the English way, with a muscular figure and a somewhat florid complexion. She was playing excitedly, placing her large bets indiscriminately upon the board wherever her fancy dictated. Lennox, on her left, was evidently cautioning her, in low tones, to reduce the amount of her ventures, but she seemed filled with the excitement of the game and paid no attention to him. Allington, on the other side, was slowly and methodically playing a system, marking down on a visiting-card, with a gold pencil, the results of his bets. Absorbed in this operation he paid little attention to his companions. Once Emmy saw him look up as the woman gave a little cry of dismay at seeing the *croupier* rake in an unusually large stake, and say to her, in a voice clearly audible across the table: "By George, Helen, old girl, going it a bit strong, aren't you?" She only laughed and took another rouleau of gold from her purse.

Of the three, Emmy found herself looking more often at the man who was playing the system. There was something unusually attractive to her about his face, now that she could observe it at her leisure. He seemed as interested as a child, and continually laughed, light-

heartedly, at his own discomfiture. She fancied that he would be this way about everything in life, taking things as they came, laughing at them, refusing to be serious. It was all very different from Tyler. She looked down at his broad back, his head bent over the board watching the turning of the wheel as though his last penny depended on the success or failure of the bet. Ransome was serious in all the things of life which had to do with money. His early years had made him so, and even now, with many millions back of him, he seemed unable to forget that in every dollar there were one hundred valuable cents. By this it is not to be understood that he was mean or close. As a matter of fact, he was neither, but he went upon the principle that one is entitled to receive a dollar's worth for every dollar expended. In this respect he differed from Allington, who was not at all concerned with whether he got the worth of the money he spent so long as he got what he wanted.

Once the latter looked up and caught Emmy's eye bent upon him. He smiled pleasantly, impersonally, as he placed a twenty-franc bet upon number seventeen and recorded it carefully upon his card. She, on her part, coloring slightly, turned away, as Ransome uttered an exclamation of pleasure. He had placed twenty-two consecutive bets of a hundred francs each on number twelve, and on the twenty-third turn of the wheel had won. He gathered up the thirty-five hundred francs which the *croupier* pushed toward him and rose from the table, crowding the mass of gold and bank-notes into his pockets as he did so.

"Well, little girl," he said, with an air of triumph, "nearly fifteen hundred francs to the good. Always a good plan to quit a winner. Guess we'd better get back to the boat now and see to my packing."

As they strolled toward the door Emmy glanced back over her shoulder toward the table. The movement was entirely involuntary. Her eyes, pausing a moment upon Allington's face, met his as he looked up. He smiled pleasantly, politely, as before. Then she went on. All the way to the yacht his face haunted her. There was a suggestion of amused mockery in his blue eyes which somehow made her feel at a loss. She wondered if she would ever meet him.

Ransome went ashore in the launch immediately after dinner. Emmy did not accompany him to the train. She spent the evening alone on deck watching the harbor lights, as they danced down into the sea, and wondering what the Englishman with the blue eyes was doing, and whether the woman who sat next to him was his wife.

CHAPTER XVII

Existence, with all of us, resolves itself into an attempt to transform a dream into a reality. When we succeed we are said to have realized our ambitions. The process is apt to prove dissatisfying, not because the dream fails to become a reality, but because by the time it has done so a new and altogether different dream has usually taken its place.

So it was with Chanler. For years he had dreamed of writing a successful novel. It seemed to him that could he but accomplish this the future would stretch smiling before him, *couleur de rose.* The realization of his dream left him singularly disquieted. After his first pleased inspection of the title page, and the gratified reading of some flattering criticisms in the newspapers, he placed the book upon his library shelf and awoke to find that what he really wanted was—Emmy.

It is true that he did not want the Emmy who had desecrated his love—who had robbed him of faith—of belief in the honor of women. What he wanted was the Emmy of his dreams, the radiant being who had made joyous his waking hours during all the weeks of his trip abroad. And, unlike his book, this dream seemed destined forever to remain one.

The knowledge that he could never possess her for the very obvious reason that, except as a creature of the imagination, she no longer existed, robbed him of hope. He fled from the city of brazen memory, nursing beneath a

calm and cynical exterior what he firmly believed to be a broken heart. It did not occur to him that had he married Emmy he might also have read her title page and placed her upon the shelf, as he had placed his book, a *fait accompli.*

He went to Paris instead of to some quiet place in the country, because he did not wish to be alone. Brooding over his loss in solitary silence might possess in it an element of pleasure—the curious joy that so unusually goes hand-in-hand with pain, but it was apt to prove rather tiresome, and in Paris he had several friends. Also he must work, he reasoned, and thoughts of the past were not likely to prove conducive to literary effort. So it happened that all during the autumn and winter that Emmy spent gadding about the shores of the Mediterranean, Chanler lived in a little studio in a quiet street, not far from the Garden of the Luxembourg, and spent his days in somewhat desultory work upon a new novel, his evenings with a few light-hearted companions who were studying art—and life—in the studios and restaurants of the Latin Quarter.

It was probably the very best sort of an environment for him at this time. He was in danger of taking himself, and life, far too seriously. These embyronic Whistlers and potential Rodins refused to take anything seriously, least of all, life—or women. They regarded the sex as they regarded their slender incomes, light-heartedly, with joy at their coming, with no great sorrow at their going—as something to be utilized for pleasure, to be parted from with a jest—a *vive la bagatelle*—a cynical quip to the effect that one can both live and achieve, without either money or women to dull the keen edge of ambition.

Under the influence of these surroundings, Chanler ac-

quired a cynical veneer which he very soon came to regard as an actual philosophy of life. Why grieve, why regret? Was not the sky blue, the sun warm, the smile of the *cocotte* as engaging as that of her more fortunate sister of the Faubourg Saint Germain? He even began to laugh at his own book, "Life." He remembered a ponderous saying in it, which at the time he had firmly believed an epigram of sorts. "Pessimism is, after all, but mental astigmatism. The far-seeing vision of the optimist discerns the approach of the dawn throughout all the darkness of the night." The thought no longer appealed to him. It was absurd, he decided, to base a philosophy of life upon a fixed belief that all things were tending toward ultimate good. Why not enjoy the things of the moment and leave the future to take care of itself? Those people who always had their eyes strained toward some imagined future got very little out of the present. So he became both cynical and pessimistic, laughing much but mirthlessly, living, thinking, breathing the hard materialism of the Quarter.

It was some time in January that he met Janet Ransome, and the meeting afforded him scant pleasure, opening as it did old wounds. A man named Warren, one of his acquaintances of the Quarter, dragged him off, rather unwillingly, to a reception at the studio of a famous landscape painter, whose pupils were giving an exhibition of their work. Among them was a girl from Boston, for whom Mr. Warren somewhat sneakingly admitted he held more than a platonic regard, and also, as it happened, Janet.

They met over chocolate and cakes, in a corner of the big studio, and Mr. Warren and his Boston friend having at once plunged into a conversation composed largely of whispers, Chanler was left to entertain Miss Ransome.

The name, Ransome, had not meant anything to him at first, but the usual mechanical questions as to Janet's home city led to her telling him that her father, Tyler Ransome, was a New Yorker, a financier of some note, whom she hoped shortly to see, as he was at present "doing" the Mediterranean with Mrs. Ransome, "my step-mother," Janet admitted, in a burst of confidence. "Isn't it queer that I've never even seen her?"

The past swept back upon him, like a flood. So this was Ransome's daughter? He had heard of her—had, indeed, wondered how Emmy would get along with her new step-daughter. The girl, he found, expected to return to America with her father, in the spring.

Chanler listened, almost rudely inattentive, to her conversational attempts. The shock of the meeting, the swift rush of thoughts concerning Emmy, had torn away his recently acquired cynicism and left him, sore and bleeding from many wounds, as of old. He managed to maintain an appearance of interest in the girl's account of her work, but soon excused himself and retired to his rooms in a state of morose gloom, which persisted for several days, in spite of his efforts to shake it off.

Warren attempted to probe the secret of his ill-humor. "Miss Ransome liked you immensely," he confided. "You ought to cultivate her, old chap. A delightful girl, believe me, and her father's worth all kinds of money. Why on earth did you run away as though something had bitten you? I wanted to make up a party and take the girls to dinner."

Chanler vouchsafed no information. "I was tired," was all he said. Warren voted him "queer" and pursued his wooing alone.

It was not until the following month that he saw Janet

again, and then it was upon the occasion of her father's visit to Paris.

Tyler Ransome, upon his arrival from Monte Carlo, proceeded at once to the old-fashioned hotel in the Rue de Rivoli at which it had been his habit to stop on previous visits, ate a hasty *dejeuner* and dashed off in a taxi to the *pension* in the Rue Lubeck, where his daughter made her home while in Paris.

Here, under the watchful eye of an elderly French woman, widow of a former officer in the army, the girl had for two years been busily engaged in absorbing French verbs, painting and "culture." Ransome had not seen his daughter for over a year—she was now eighteen —in that year she had become a woman.

She rushed into his arms, heedless of the presence of Madame Cardon, extravagantly happy at his coming. Being in Paris, yet not of it, she had found it very much like observing from a distance an amazingly beautiful garden, the gates to which were forever closed. Ransome, on his part, felt, at seeing her, all the joys of paternal love; she was exquisite, justifying completely his expectations and his pride.

To describe the mere outward appearance, the physical loveliness of the girl would be like setting forth the binding, the type, the external aspect of some rare book which one must read and understand to appreciate. Janet was of medium height, but a million women are that. Her eyes were brown, with a flash of gold in their depths, but who, after all, can tell, in words, the message of a woman's eyes? The red-bronze high-lights of her hair, the wide-eyed, serenely honest brow, the complexion clear with the glow of youth and health, the figure vibrant with Nature's as yet unfulfilled promise—these things are a not un-

common heritage of the sex. To picture Janet one must needs write with a magic pen, capable of setting down in queer little pot-hooks and hangers the sweet mystery of youth, the beauty of character, the virginity of soul, which clung about her like an enchanted veil.

To Ransome she was his daughter—his beautiful, exquisite daughter, creature of his flesh and blood. That temple of his heart in which her image was enshrined resounded with the cold purity of hymnal music. He felt awkward, constrained, at first, and wondered how she, the white rose, and Emmy, the tiger lily, would be able to thrive side by side in a common soil.

They had a wonderful afternoon and evening together, the first in the shops, the second at dinner at a famous restaurant in the Boulevards. He took her there instead of to the solemn meal at his hotel, because she craved life and gaiety and excitement, as youth ever craves it. Afterwards they went to a performance of "Thaïs" at the Opera.

The girl was enchanted. She knew little more of Paris than the average week-end tourist. The exhibition at the studio had been the greatest dissipation of the winter. When Ransome finally took her home she declared that it had been the most perfect evening of her life.

Her father planned to remain in Paris for several days. His love for his daughter craved expression, and for the moment there seemed but one way in which he could express it—by opening wide his purse, buying her beautiful things, making her days happy ones in every way his imagination could devise. He inquired after her friends; he was filled with the idea of entertaining them as well; any one who had been good to his little girl could have anything in his power to give.

Janet admitted, rather timidly, that her friends were painfully few. Beside some French people, there was Emily Stevens, the girl from Boston, who lived in the same *pension*, and Mr. Warren, and—and Mr. Chanler. Ransome had in mind a breakfast at St. Cloud the following day. Perhaps they would come. Chanler's name stirred no strand of memory that led to Emmy, nor would it have mattered much if it had. Ransome had never been jealous of Chanler; he knew nothing to make him jealous.

Janet said that she would have Miss Stevens write to Mr. Warren that night, and perhaps he would bring Mr. Chanler with him. They were to meet at the *pension* at eleven.

Just why Chanler agreed to be one of the party he could not, perhaps, have told. When Warren came into his studio the next morning at ten, waving Miss Stevens' letter in the air, Chanler was struggling between a desire to waste the morning in a long walk through the Bois, and a feeling of duty toward his new novel, which was by no means progressing with the rapidity which his publishers seemed to expect.

Warren exploded, staccato, like a bunch of conversational firecrackers. "Old man Ransome is here! Wants to meet his daughter's friends! Breakfast at St. Cloud! Hurry up and dress! Meet them at eleven! Rue Lubeck! Of course you'll go! Think of the feed you'll get! And, then, I want a chance to talk to Miss Stevens! You've got to entertain the old man! Come along!"

Perhaps it was a vague curiosity to see the sort of man that Emmy had married—perhaps a knowledge that he would hear about Emmy herself. At any rate, Chanler went.

Janet had dreamed for two long, dull Parisian years

of the young prince who would some day ride up on his charger and awaken her from her slumbers. Always she had pictured to herself a young man, tall, dark, clean-shaven, intellectual, strong, artistic, a man who had accomplished something in the world. Business being prosaic and not approved by the canons of romance, she pictured him as an artist or a writer. It is small wonder that when she saw Chanler on the occasion of their first meeting, he had seemed the sentient reality of the man of her dreams.

He, on his part, had found her a pleasing young girl, simple and unaffected, but with no suggestion of the emotional warmth which had enabled Emmy to set fire to his love and fan it into a devastating flame. Chanler was a keen observer of humanity, but his obsession regarding Emmy blinded him to the fact that Janet, in spite of her apparent simplicity, possessed amply the elements necessary for an emotional conflagration of the first order.

Ransome, delighted with his daughter and her friends, played the part of host with great gusto. Chanler had taken occasion to inform him as to his identity, whereupon the old gentleman became doubly cordial. "Mrs. Ransome has often told me how kind you were to her when she first came to New York. I owe you a debt of gratitude, my boy. She'd be delighted to see you—why not run down to Monaco for a visit?"

The meal at St. Cloud was a protracted one. Ransome was determined to do honor to his daughter and her friends and astonished the waiter by the extent of his orders. They did not start back until after two. Chanler volunteered to show Janet and her father the pictures in the Louvre. Ransome, however, pleaded business at his bank-

ers. "You may take my daughter, if you like," he said. "I'm sure she would enjoy it."

As soon as he left them, Warren and Miss Stevens announced that they were going for a drive in the Bois. "We don't ask you to come," the former remarked, with a grin. "We are certain you will enjoy the pictures more." He winked broadly at Chanler as they took their departure. The latter wondered, grimly, if he would ever again be in love.

Janet had been through the Louvre several times. It figured largely in the acquisition of "culture," as understood by Madame Cardon. Chanler was in no mood for looking at pictures—he rather resented Ransome's action in placing Janet in his care for the afternoon. He had intended to retire to a little café in the Latin Quarter, where it was his habit to sit for an hour or two every day before dinner, over an absinthe, in true Parisian style. There was nothing to do, however, but entertain Janet to the best of his ability. When she suggested, with a twinkle in her eye, that she hated looking at pictures and much preferred the Boulevards, he glanced at her with renewed interest, and noted for the first time that she was not only very beautiful, but that her eyes had in them a most unexpected sparkle and one which had apparently not been there while she was under the watchful gaze of her father.

Contrary to his expectations, Chanler spent a very agreeable afternoon. On the impulse of the moment he took Janet with him to the little café in question, fed her with pastry and coffee, and pointed out to her some of the celebrities of the Quarter whose habit it was to gather here in the late afternoon, when the light had failed, with their sweethearts and models. The girl was charmed;

under the influence of the Bohemian atmosphere of the place all her natural and wholesome humor, her unconscious *naviete* came bubbling to the surface. She delighted Chanler with her freshness, her youth, her unsophisticated attitude toward life. "To think," she said, "that I have lived in Paris for over two years and this is the first time I have ever been alone with a man, except father, in all that time."

Chanler regarded her with an indulgent smile, as one might regard a child. "I feel deeply honored. I hope it may occur frequently, if I am to be the man."

"Oh, so do I! I do so love to meet interesting people, like you—people who have seen and done so much. It's terrible to think of never doing anything at all in the world."

"But surely *you* will."

"I suppose I'll just—marry, like most women." She gave a little grimace.

"But that is a great deal."

"Yes, it *is* a great deal," she said, with sudden earnestness, "if it brings love, and happiness, and—and children." She blushed to find herself speaking so frankly to him, but his grave look reassured her. "Of course, I don't know very much about such things, but I think a woman ought to be very happy just to have the love and respect and admiration of some real man. I suppose I'm terribly old-fashioned—I like all sorts of homely, simple things. I think I'd love a quiet place in an English country town, with a high wall about it, and just those that I love, my husband, and my children, and a few friends, within. Of course, I'm interested in big cities, but I don't think I'd care to live in one. I'd rather just come to them once in a while to keep in touch with the world. Living in

big cities makes people cruel, I think, don't you?" She looked up at him, shyly, fearing his disapproval.

"You ask for the best things there are in life," he said, with a smile. "I hope you will get them."

"Most of the girls at the school laugh at me. They want dresses and jewels and all sorts of expensive things. I've never cared for them, somehow. Father has given me lots, but I hardly ever wear them."

Chanler looked into her clear, honest eyes and concluded that she herself was a jewel, rare and beyond price, to be possessed some day by an unusually fortunate man. He did not think of himself as this man. Emmy's searing kisses had left too great a scar.

There is no doubt, however, that Janet's personality impressed him deeply. By reasoning a materialist, he was by faith full of romance. The gentle, old-fashioned tenderness of love, which, as a child, he had seen between his father and mother, the courtly worship of womanhood, the unselfish devotion to simple ideals and duties, the sacredness of the marriage vow—these things he believed in as he believed in the teachings of Christ, and yet both remained with him as, with most people, a belief rather than a practice.

One thing he noticed. The more he talked with Janet the more he wanted to talk with her. He found her a most restful and pleasant companion, a delightful comrade. She had asked him much about his novel, but he avoided the subject; almost he felt that he would rather she did not read it. Her mind seemed so singularly fresh and crystal clear, so like the morning of a spring day—as Emmy's was the sultry August noon. And he realized that while the morning held also within it the promise of

the noon, it would be the warmth which cherishes, not the heat which blasts and consumes.

This afternoon was but the first of several pleasant meetings. In the evening Ransome insisted on taking them to dinner at the most famous restaurant in Paris, and afterward to a comedy at the Théâtre Française, which, perhaps luckily, neither Janet nor her father thoroughly understood. The following day they spent quite happily at Versailles. Chanler felt with Janet as with a dear friend. When he touched her hand at parting he thought it trembled slightly in his, but the contact left his pulses cool. He still saw in her only the unawakened child.

On the third day, Janet's shopping having been completed, and no further reason presenting itself for delay, Ransome decided to return to Monte Carlo. He tried to persuade Chanler to accompany them, but the latter refused, and no amount of argument could change him. He gave as his reason his uncompleted book. The real reason was that he did not wish to see Emmy. Whether he would love her or hate her, their meeting would be equally unpleasant, and that there was no middle ground of indifference he very well knew.

He saw Janet and her father off at the Lyons station, promising to write, and assured by Ransome that he would always be a most welcome visitor whenever he might care to look them up. When he returned to his rooms he was conscious of a feeling of loneliness, but then he had been lonely for a long time and Emmy he insisted upon regarding as the cause.

Ransome lay awake in his berth a long time that night, his mind tortured by a horde of formless doubts. How would Janet like Emmy? She had questioned him most persistently about her stepmother during the three days in

Paris. And how, indeed, would Emmy like Janet? Was his beautiful young wife the best person to guide the as yet latent potentialities of the girl's character? His doubts implied no criticism of Emmy—he was too fond of her for that, but, after all, she was nearly as young as Janet, in years at least. Perhaps some older woman, some woman of more mature judgment—he paused. The thought seemed to his rugged, honest nature to smack of disloyalty to his wife, yet he realized, all at once, that a feeling of jealousy had grown up about his love for his daughter —a veritable wall which not even Emmy could surmount. It was a perplexing question. He concluded that he could arrive at no decision until he had seen the two together.

CHAPTER XVIII

It is astonishing how bored Emmy became as soon as she was left alone. Her husband had never before been away from her for a day, scarcely for an hour, since their marriage: she suddenly began to realize both how large a part of her life he had become and how little else there was in it.

Of course, there were all the trivial things by which she set so much store, the interminable combing of hair, massaging, manicuring, bathing, perfuming, putting on of exquisite costumes and taking them off again, but she knew, in her heart, that these things were a means, not an end. To do them, hour after hour, day after day, seemed a singular waste of time and effort, if not directed toward some purpose. And what, indeed, was this purpose? She had never so directly catechized herself before. From her mirror was reflected a polished, exquisite, perfumed being, radiating health, charm, sex. She realized fully how alluring, how desirable she was, from a masculine standpoint. Certainly she had spared no effort to make herself so. Had all this, then, been for Ransome's benefit? She smiled ever so slightly, and adjusted a vagrant strand of hair. She had Ransome bound hand and foot. For some other man, then? How useless, since to all other men she was as impossible as the moon. She reflected upon this aspect of the matter for some time, and with her reflections came a realization that in spite of the fact that she was married, she desired as strongly

as ever to attract other men. With her customary directness, she admitted it, frankly, to herself. Life seemed to stretch a long distance into the future. Ransome was but an episode. She wanted love—wanted to thrill and grow faint at the touch of some man's hand—the sound of some man's voice. Fluttering dreams of savage caresses, of close, breathless kisses haunted her, made her restless, irritable. An elemental something within her was stirring, crying out for satisfaction. She drew fiercely within her arms the fuzzy Maltese terrier that had been one of her early acquisitions. The impulse meant nothing to her; she laughed, and dropped the dog upon his pillow, yet for the moment the tiny, warm creature, nuzzling in her arms, had given her an infinite peace.

The course of all her day-dreams led across the blue waters of the harbor to the town. How senseless it seemed, to mope about her stateroom; or sit on deck in a steamer chair, reading interminable novels, while just across the bay, almost within reach of her hand, lay all the life and gaiety and adventure she craved.

On the afternoon of the third day she hurled her book irritably across the deck, went to her stateroom, put on her most fetching afternoon gown and ordered the launch.

A short drive about the town, a visit to one or two of the shops, and then the restless spirit which had possessed her for the past three days landed her at the doors of the Casino.

The afternoon was chill and unpleasant. She went in to the tables and began to play. It was the first time that she had attempted to do so alone, and the prospect delighted her. She saw nothing of the tall young Englishman—although she looked for him industriously, but the woman she had seen with him, and whom he had addressed as

Helen, she observed some distance from her, playing in a nervous, intense way, which suggested a run of bad luck.

On leaving the yacht Emmy had taken from a safe in her stateroom a roll of bills—hundred-franc notes mostly, with a few of larger denomination. It was a sum which Ransome insisted upon always having on board in case of accident or emergency. She had not counted the money, but knew that in all she had in her purse some ten thousand francs.

She played for the love of the excitement—because she was bored—because she hoped to see, possibly in some way to meet, the man who had attracted her attention. She did not care so greatly about winning, and Fortune, her back turned upon the solicitous, touched Emmy's careless hand with her magic wand. The very first play she made—a hundred-franc note upon number twenty—won, and the *croupier* pushed over to her a great mass of notes and gold. She drew them to her, carelessly, and played again with reckless indifference and, again and again, she won. The other players, the watching crowd, all turned in envious wonder toward the beautiful American who raked in winnings of thousands of francs at a time without the quiver of an eyelash. So engrossed did Emmy become in her play that she failed to observe the Englishwoman rise from the table with an expression of dismay and stagger toward the door.

By five o'clock the excitement of the experience began to pall. She had no use for the money she was winning. She glanced at the great pile of gold and bank-notes before her and wondered how she would ever be able to carry it all.

An obliging attendant assisted her to exchange the gold and smaller notes for others of larger denomination.

She crammed the bundle, with considerable difficulty, into her meshed purse and left the rooms. Two silent attendants, at a nod from a superior, went out after her to see that she reached her destination in safety.

Emmy strolled along one of the terraces in an aimless way, wondering what had become of the handsome Englishman. She was disappointed not to have seen him. As she turned a corner she saw sitting upon a bench beneath a mass of overhanging shrubbery a woman, whom she at once recognized as the one who had been playing at the far end of the table but a short time before. She had thrown herself upon the bench in an attitude of utter despair, her head upon her arm, outstretched along its back. From the convulsive movement of her shoulders Emmy could see that she was sobbing.

As she came up the woman raised her head and Emmy thought that never had she beheld so ghastly a countenance, or one so utterly devoid of hope. Astonished, she paused a moment before the bench, then with a swift and compassionate movement, turned to the woman and spoke. "Can I be of any assistance to you, madam?" she asked.

The woman looked up, with a momentary expression of resentment—of hauteur. Then something in Emmy's manner softened her. "I'm afraid not," she said, in a weary voice, and turned away.

"You'll pardon me, I know," Emmy continued, her voice expressing a lively concern. "I thought that you might be in some trouble and that, perhaps—I might——" she hesitated for a moment under the other's chilling glances, then went on, with a little *moué* of dissatisfaction. "It must be very annoying—to lose. You see, I've had such wonderful luck myself that I feel as though I simply *must* share it with somebody." With a cheerful laugh she

patted her bulging purse. At once she divined both that the woman had been a heavy loser, and that this fact might afford her a great opportunity.

The woman on the bench looked at her in doubt, her eyes upon the purse. Apparently she was trying to make up her mind whether to resent the advances of a stranger, or to clutch at this straw so providentially cast into the maelstrom of her emotions. "I congratulate you," she said, in a dull voice. "I have just lost eighty thousand francs." She named the sum as though its magnitude signified nothing short of her death-warrant.

Emmy sat down. "That's an awful lot, isn't it? Let me see—sixteen thousand dollars! My!" Her manner was ingenuous to the verge of infantility, although her brain was busy with calculations by no means infantile.

"Over three thousand pounds," the woman went on, in a mournful voice; then, as she dashed the tears from her eyes, she threw her reserve suddenly aside. "And the worst of it is," she blurted out, in awed tones, "it wasn't mine."

"Just think," remarked Emmy, discreetly ignoring the latter statement, "I've got your money."

"How so?" The woman gazed at her, her face blank.

"Well, you've lost eighty thousand francs. I shouldn't be surprised if I'd won about that much. The bank simply took the money from you and gave it to me. I've no earthly right to it."

"But—you won it."

"I know, but under the circumstances I couldn't possibly keep it."

A spark of hope crept into the woman's eyes. "It's awfully good of you to bother, you know," she said. "Of course, there's nothing anybody can do. My name is

Napier—Helen Napier. My husband, Sir George Napier, is *Chargé d'Affaires* at Rome. I am staying here with my mother, the Countess of Wroxeter. I lost thirty thousand francs yesterday, and to-day I made up my mind to win it back." Her voice broke, her words trembled on the crest of a sob. "So I borrowed the money—two thousand pounds at first—from a man here—a money-lender—I gave him notes, and then, when I lost more and more I gave checks—checks that I cannot meet—that my husband cannot meet. Of course, they will be made good, my family will see to that, but I—I shall be ruined, and my husband as well. I don't know how I ever came to do such a thing—I must have been mad. Now it's gone, and I might as well kill myself." She was completely unstrung and poured out her troubles to Emmy with hysterical eagerness.

Emmy, along with other excellent qualities, was eminently practical. She made no comment whatever upon Lady Napier's story, but opened her purse, dumped the mass of bank-notes into her lap and said, simply: "Help me count them."

Lady Napier obeyed, with trembling fingers. The operation consumed several minutes. The total was somewhat over seventy thousand francs. Emmy thrust the mass of paper into Lady Napier's hands, detached from her finger a ring set with a large emerald and placed it on top of the notes. "I guess that will be enough," she remarked, pleasantly.

Lady Napier drew back. "You don't mean——" she gasped.

"Why not? I don't need the money. I'm Emmy Ransome. My husband is Tyler Ransome. He has plenty of money. I'm an American."

Lady Napier gazed from the pile of notes to the smiling face of her companion in complete bewilderment. Evidently Emmy's last statement—that she was an American—accounted for her remarkable actions. She did not realize that Emmy, in her outburst of generosity, was perfectly well aware of the enormous obligation under which, with little or no cost to herself, she was placing Lady Napier. The friendship of this woman, daughter of the Countess of Wroxeter, meant infinitely more to Emmy Ransome than a few soiled French bank-notes which she had won without the least effort, and for which she had not the slightest need. "I couldn't take it, I really couldn't," said Lady Napier, drearily.

Emmy flashed at her one of her brilliant smiles. "Don't be foolish," she said. "I really don't want the money. I have more now than I know what to do with. It's your money, anyway. We've both had the fun of playing, and that's the end of it. I couldn't think of taking money at the cost of some other woman's happiness." She placed her hand upon the other's arm. "Please take it. I don't know what I shall ever do with it if you don't. My husmand doesn't approve of my gambling, and I never could explain how I came to have all that."

Her bright and almost childlike manner won the other woman at once. She took the ring and handed it back to Emmy. "If you are willing to lend me this money," she said, "I'll be your friend as long as I live. It will save me everything I have in the world—my honor—my good name—my husband. I may not be able to repay you for a long time, possibly never; that is a risk you must run, but whether I am ever able to repay you or not I shall never forget—never." There were tears in her eyes as she

spoke, but her courage had returned; she was once more able to hope.

Emmy held out her hand. "It's a bargain. But why not the ring?"

"No, no, not that. I can make up the difference somehow." She rose and glanced along the terrace. Two men were approaching, darkly silhouetted against the evening sky. Emmy recognized them at once. Lady Napier's next words made her strangely happy. "My brother," she said, "and Mr. Lennox."

"By Jove, Helen, old girl!" cried the taller of the two, in a voice the *timbre* of which gave Emmy a delightful thrill. "We've been looking for you everywhere. What's the row?" he added, observing her tear-stained face.

Lady Napier had already thrust the roll of bank-notes into her purse. "Nothing, Freddie," she remarked, pointedly. "I want you to meet Mrs. Tyler Ransome. Mrs. Ransome, this is my big brother, Lord Alfred. And Mr. George Lennox."

The two men bowed. Allington at least appeared delighted. Lennox observed him with a cynical smile as they moved toward the entrance. "What a splendid-looking couple they make," he observed to himself. "If only she had happened to be a widow."

Allington had glanced at his sister with keen curiosity as she crushed the money into her purse, but something in her manner warned him to ask no questions. She had at once assumed an air of light-hearted unconcern, in striking contrast with her previous woe-begone manner. She did not even explain her acquaintance with Emmy, beyond remarking that Mrs. Ransome had done her a great service. She did, however, insist that the latter should dine with them that evening, and after some hesita-

tion Emmy agreed to the arrangemnt.

Lord Allington saw her safely aboard the launch—she was to return at eight, after dressing, and the latter's car was to meet her at the landing. She went aboard the Redwing, her head whirling with joy. By one lucky stroke she had accomplished something which otherwise she could not have hoped to bring about by years of tireless effort. She ran down the companionway to her stateroom, singing.

The dinner was to take place at Lady Wroxeter's villa, charmingly situated on the outskirts of the town toward Nice. Emmy, after much deliberation, chose a creation in nile-green and gold, which she had secured during her stay in Rome. It was a strikingly beautiful costume, but people rarely noticed what Emmy had on. The woman glowed so vitally from and through her clothes that the latter became secondary, unimportant, a mere setting for an amazing jewel. When Lord Alfred gallantly took her cloak at the villa he drew back with a little gasp of astonishment, then hunted up Lennox, who was one of the party, and informed him, over an entirely unnecessary brandy and soda, that Mrs. Ransome was "the most stunningly beautiful creature, bar none," that he had ever seen in his life.

The impression she made upon Lady Wroxeter was somewhat less favorable, although even that austere personage was forced to admit the girl's loveliness. It was not to be expected that Emmy, with all her native shrewdness, her genius for imitation, could, in less than a year, acquire the manner of the *grand monde*—the ease of the woman born to the purple. Nevertheless, she did wonderfully well. Her slight *gaucheries* were regarded by the others as mere Americanisms and so dismissed. Lady

Napier was radiant. She had not, of course, told her mother of the nature of Emmy's service to her, but she had told her that Tyler Ransome was enormously wealthy, and that, to Lady Wroxeter's mind, was something of a recommendation. They had always been horribly poor; that is, from the standpoint of a member of the peerage. Wroxeter himself spent double his income yearly and was crushed beneath a load of debts. Lady Wroxeter had long hoped that Alfred would marry wealth; she had urged him to go to America with this end in view. Should he do so, she reasoned, Mrs. Ransome might be of some assistance. When Emmy spoke of her husband's absence, and of the coming of Janet, Lady Wroxeter pricked up her ears and began to address her as "my dear." Janet would some day have a great fortune. Why not should Alfred—she fell into profound thought.

Allington was carrying on a violent flirtation with Emmy, to the latter's secret delight. He was well versed in the game—had he followed any other vocation with equal assiduity he would have achieved a notable success. His easy talk of the hunting-field, of India and of Egypt, where he had seen service; of Paris, still to Emmy a land of dreams, interested her as no other man's conversation had interested her up to now. When later they sat on the moonlit veranda, with the Mediterranean spread before them like a soft blue carpet dusted with stars, he began to talk of love. The transition was easy, to his practiced mind—Paris—the Invalides—Napoleon—the great lovers of history—love itself. To speak of love is but to make love, the French say. Lord Alfred believed in carrying on such affairs with *elan*—a quick dash upon the enemy's citadel—a night surprise—no time for reflection, for counter-attack. In an hour he was telling Emmy how

lonely he was, meanwhile touching her hand lightly, accidentally almost, yet with a tender, caressing meaning. He declared, emphatically, that her heart had never known love—that its emotional depths had until now remained unsounded. He should not speak of it, he protested, but was not love, after all, greater than law? If he had only known her before. He sighed, clutched her hand convulsively, fiercely, looked into her eyes and rasped out in a voice intentionally hoarse: "With you in my life I might have known the joys of Paradise." He almost kissed her. Emmy, thinking he was about to do so, drew back. That he did not arose solely from the fact that Lady Wroxeter, Helen Napier and Lennox were sitting not ten paces away at the other end of the veranda.

There is no doubt that Emmy was vastly delighted. Her vanity was flattered. This man, at the very top of the social ladder, talked to her of love—looked it—vibrated it in every tone—whirled it upon her with hot insistence. Why? She wondered why? He could hope for no result, at least none within any rightful bounds. She did not understand that Allington always made love to women who appealed to him, and certainly Emmy, in her flagrant beauty, appealed to him extravagantly. Had he himself been asked to explain why he did it he could not have said. The thing had become a habit with him, a habit, too, which it became increasingly difficult to follow as years and satiety demanded greater emotional stimulation. With Emmy he was almost in earnest—she felt that every fibre of him yearned for her—he made her feel that, and because of it she felt afraid of him. It was a fear, however, fraught with a sense of intoxicating delight. When he told her that were they just two human beings, a man and a woman—his woman—alone in the vast velvety night of

some desert, he would fold her in his arms and ask but the blessing of the stars upon their happiness, she almost felt his lips upon hers. It was too poignant—too real. She shivered and rose. "I think I had better be going," she announced, quietly, and went toward the others.

Allington stroked his mustache and swore. There was still, however, the motor ride to the landing. He determined that he would kiss her then, but in spite of all his protestations Emmy would not permit it. She felt that he was dangerous, and then, too, there might come a time when she would still wish to have that kiss—that first kiss, to give him. Perhaps it was not entirely a coincidence that there should have flashed through her mind, as she gazed at her charming self in the mirror that night, the thought that Tyler was well over sixty.

CHAPTER XIX

It was the afternoon of Janet's first day at Monte Carlo and she was sitting under the awning on the after-deck of the yacht, reading Grant Chanler's book, "Life." She had found a copy in the saloon and had seized upon it eagerly. The man's personality had impressed her; she hoped that she might some day see him again, and the opportunity to learn more about him and his outlook upon life, through the medium of his book, delighted her. She curled herself up in a steamer-chair and was soon deep in the opening chapters.

Of Emmy she had as yet seen but little. Her father and herself had arrived in time for a late luncheon, and the conversation at the table had consisted largely of an enthusiastic description on Emmy's part of her evening at Lady Wroxeter's. Needless to say, Mrs. Ransome did not deem it necessary to dilate upon the part which Lord Allington had played in the evening's entertainment. Janet felt, throughout the meal, that Emmy was observing her narrowly; she sat quiet, saying but little, and Emmy was so taken up with her story that no mention was made of their meeting with Chanler in Paris.

After luncheon her father and Emmy remained below and the girl, feeling that they desired to be alone, had retired to the deck with her book.

Ransome had much to say to his wife about Janet and her future. His anxiety concerning the girl's training, his hope that she and Emmy would come to like, even to

care for each other, led him to read Emmy a long lecture upon the proper bringing up of young girls, to which the latter listened, very much bored. Some intuition told Ransome that there lay between the two women a wide gulf; he did not know the cause of it, but the idea had fixed itself firmly in his mind and refused to be dislodged. The enthusiasm with which Emmy described her experiences at the gaming table (she was obliged to confess this part of her adventure in order to explain Lady Napier's sudden interest in her), her excitement as she spoke of Lord Alfred and his interesting personality, her whole manner, all told him that Emmy was tugging at the leash, ready for any adventure. He almost regretted having taken Janet from school. To him she seemed so ethereal, so innocent, so much of a child. He feared to have her flung into a round of gaieties which would inevitably brush from her the tender bloom of youth and leave her a sophisticated woman. Like most fathers, he disliked to see his daughter grow up.

It was toward the end of his long dissertation, and Emmy had yawned gracefully several times behind her well-manicured hand, when sudden mention was made of Chanler and their meeting in Paris. Ransome was clumsily pointing out the type of man which he felt might make Janet a desirable husband. He referred to Chanler as an example of this type, a clean-cut American who had, by hard work, made his mark in the world. Emmy gave a sudden gasp and sat bolt upright, her hands gripping the arms of her chair. "You met Mr. Chanler?" she asked, her voice trembling somewhat, in spite of her efforts to control it.

Ransome did not observe her agitation. "Of course I did," he said. "I've taken a great fancy to the fellow,

Invited him down here, but he wouldn't come. We'll go on to Paris later. I'd like to see more of him."

Emmy rose, a sudden jealousy tearing at her heart. "Perhaps I had better go up and talk to Janet now," she said. "We ought to be getting acquainted."

Janet, deep in her book, did not at first hear Emmy as the latter came toward her. The girl had seized upon the pages before her as upon some novel experience in her hitherto sheltered existence. Her early life, spent in a convent school; the past two years, under the watchful eye of Madame Cardon; had left her strangely ignorant of the world and its ways. Even the books which she had been allowed to read had been carefully selected for her so as to contain no hint of those vital experiences which form so large a part of life. Her mind had been fed on the bloodless theories of those whose idea of innocence is ignorance. Always they had taught her to deny her sex instincts, to regard them as sinful. Marriage, she had been told, was a communion of souls, made in heaven, while man, a creature of innate brutality, was to be raised up and ennobled by woman's exquisite refining influence. In other words, they had taught her nothing, save only that the very instincts which had given her being were the product of a prehistoric sin. It was to Janet's credit that she had come through this course of training with so virginal a soul.

With burning cheeks she read the paragraph which opened the second chapter: "To man, a woman's first appeal is that of passion; her second and most lasting, that of understanding. The first forms the foundation of love, set deep in the clay—the second, the perfect structure, reaching to the stars. As the flower springs from the mud, so love springs from the things of earth, its roots

deep in Nature's breast, yet with its exquisite blossoms facing toward heaven. Without understanding, love remains forever a tuberous growth, buried in the mire—without passion it becomes an air plant, an orchid, rooted in no soil, unwholesome, purposeless, vapid. Let no woman despise passion, for it holds within it the purpose of all nature, but woe be unto those who raise up an altar to the things of the body and seek not beyond for the things of the soul."

She read this over and over, wondering that this man should speak so highly of that which she had always been taught to regard as inherently wrong and debasing. Could it be possible that he would talk frankly of matters of this sort should she ever come to know him well? She feared that he had found her stupid and uninteresting, knowing nothing of the great world in which he lived. She had felt during her brief contact with Emmy at luncheon that the latter had been raised in a very different school. It occurred to her as strange that this woman, so beautiful, so full of vitality and life, had worked as Chanler's secretary, meeting him day after day, alone and intimately, for nearly a year, without having made him fall in love with her. Certainly, even to her limited knowledge of such matters, Emmy's personality breathed passion in its largest sense; she was a woman to appeal to any man on that basis. Was she then lacking in the understanding of which Chanler so glibly wrote? What, after all, did he mean by this understanding? Was it some quality of mind or soul which enabled a woman to feel deeper needs in a man's being than those of the body alone? She was busy with these reflections when Emmy came up and threw herself into a nearby chair.

"I see you are reading Mr. Chanler's book," remarked

the latter in a voice of unusual sweetness. "Your father tells me you met him in Paris. How did you like him?"

Janet closed the book and dropped it into her lap. "I liked him very much. He seemed so pleasant and agreeable. You know him very well, do you not?"

"Very. I acted as his secretary for nearly a year. We were great friends." She glanced at the book lying in Janet's lap. "I wrote that story for him on the typewriter. We had great fun over it, discussing his theories."

"What do you think of his theories?" asked Janet.

"Which ones? Mr. Chanler has so many, you know?"

Janet took up the book and read the paragraph which had given her so much food for thought. "Of course, I don't know much about such things," she ventured, timidly, "but it seems to me that he is inclined to be rather—broad. I had never thought that a woman's first appeal to a man was one of passion."

Emmy looked at the girl with a reminiscent smile. "He isn't nearly as broad as he pretends to be. I remember the paragraph you have just read very well. We argued about it for over an hour one morning. These writers, you know, say a great many things just for effect. Half the time they don't mean them. Now, that about seeking for the things of the soul sounds very well, but, after all, material things count for more. Mr. Chanler used to think that two people could be happy if they just loved each other and understood each other, whether they had money or not. It's a beautiful, old-fashioned theory, but when the babies and the doctor's bills and all the other wretched things which go to make up existence begin to come along it's mighty apt to knock all the poetry out of life and leave you stranded on the rocks."

Janet felt somewhat disconcerted. Love in a cottage

had always been a pet theory of hers. It was easier to indulge in it imaginatively, no doubt, knowing as she did that it was an experience which her father's millions would prevent her from ever realizing. "I have always thought that love should be the most beautiful, the most precious thing in the world, far more so than anything that money could possibly buy."

"Perhaps it should be," said Emmy, rather bitterly, "but it isn't. I know a great deal about poverty myself. My father"—she hesitated, remembering the fiction about the brick manufacturer—"my father," she went on, "was not a wealthy man, and—and there were many things that I missed when I was a girl—advantages which you, my dear, have had. With your looks and your money you should be able to marry any one you please. I should not waste much time on romance, if I were you. Now that I have met Lady Napier and her family we shall have no difficulty in becoming acquainted with the best people in London. Lady Wroxeter has already invited us to visit them at Walsingham Court, their place in Surrey. The earl is in Egypt. You must know Lord Allington. That's his son, you know. We are going to have them for luncheon on board to-morrow. Lady Wroxeter is very partial to Americans, she tells me. They haven't much money, as nearly as I can find out. Lord Alfred is one of the handsomest men I have ever seen. I don't doubt you will like him immensely. You might even become Countess of Wroxeter some day if you play your cards right."

Janet looked at her stepmother, doubtfully. "I don't know that I should care particularly about being a countess, especially if it was just because of my money. I hope to fall in love some day, you know."

"With a tall, dark man, I suppose," laughed Emmy,

"with an athletic figure and a square chin, like the pictures in the novels. Artist or writer preferred." There was a trace of venom in her remark, but Janet did not detect it. The picture of Chanler which Emmy had drawn caused her to blush self-consciously. It was a picture which had been very much in her mind during the past twenty-four hours.

That night Emmy tossed about for a long time before she went to sleep. The situation which had developed was one with which she scarcely knew how to cope. Janet was evidently very much taken with Chanler, and her father frankly determined upon going at once to Paris and cultivating the young man's further acquaintance. What Chanler's attitude in the matter might be she did not know, but the whole enterprise filled her with alarm. That she herself loved Chanler she very well knew. The sudden sinking of her heart, the catch in her throat when Ransome mentioned his name, had told her this even as her own thoughts had told it to her a thousand times during the past few months. For her to enter into an intimate association with him, to act the part of a matchmaker on Jane's behalf, would be an impossibility, either from her own standpoint, or, she felt sure, from his. Then there were the Wroxeters. Now that she had made their acquaintance she meant to gather the fruits. She wanted to visit them in Surrey, and afterwards to spend the season in London. Married to Ransome, she knew that love in any legitimate sense she could not rightly look for within the limits of her life, and to look for it outside of these limits would, she felt sure, be quite inexpedient. Therefore she turned to the gaieties of a London season, to the joys of social success, to satisfy the cravings which had arisen in her nature. To the outcome of her affair with

Lord Allington she gave no thought. She felt herself entirely capable of carrying on a deliciously exciting flirtation which would result in no harm to either of them, but she was quite ready to turn Lord Alfred over to Janet, if thereby she could destroy the girl's interest in Chanler. Her primitive instincts caused her to decide that since she could not have Chanler for herself she would not allow any other woman to have him, so long, at least, as she could prevent it. Janet she did not like. Even as the latter had recognized in Emmy the conscious power of physical attraction, so Emmy saw in this unsophisticated girl's eyes something she did not understand, something which annoyed her and made her feel afraid. Some prescience warned her that between Janet and herself would one day arise a battle, in which she would need all her strength to gain the victory.

CHAPTER XX

"It seems to me, Lord Alfred," remarked Emmy as she regarded, distastefully, the disappearing figure of her liege lord, "that you are paying me entirely too much attention."

"By Jove! do you think so?" Allington stroked his mustache. "That's what the mater says. She wants me to go in for Miss Ransome. As though a fellow could, with you in the running."

"But I'm *not* in the running."

Allington looked down his nose. "I suppose you're not, if you come to that, but I can't seem to realize it, just the same. Do you know, I always think of Mr. Ransome as your father."

"Don't be silly."

"I'm not. As a matter of fact, I'm fearfully in earnest. I love you——"

"You've told me that at least a dozen times during the past week. I must say it's not very sensible."

"People don't love, or not love, because it's sensible. They just can't help it. I love you and I mean to marry you some day."

"How do you propose to do that? Don't forget that I have a very live and able-bodied husband."

"Hang your husband!"

"I couldn't very well do that." Emmy smiled a rather doleful smile. "You really mustn't say such things, you know. It isn't—nice."

Allington leaned toward her and took her hand. Emmy did not draw it away—it was nearly dark, and there was no one else on the terrace. "I love you," he muttered, drawing her toward him. "I shall always love you. I want you more than I've ever wanted anything in the world. I'll wait for you—some day you may be free. I know I shouldn't say such things. I wouldn't say them if you loved our husband, but you don't. Any one can see that. You're wasted—wasted—the sweetest and dearest woman in the world. Don't you suppose I can realize what your life means to you—what it lacks? You want to be made to *live*—you're just existing now—wasting yourself on a man old enough to be your father." His voice rasped, husky with feeling. His breath came in quick little gasps, through his teeth. Emmy felt his fingers tighten about hers, and before she realized what he was about he had swept her into his arms and was crushing her lips against his.

Allington's knowledge of women, while not profound, was, in the main, accurate. In reality it was not knowledge at all, but a sense; the product of emotion, not of logical process. He did not reason the matter out and arrive at the conclusion that Emmy desired his kisses. He sensed it. It must have been telepathic, for there is no denying that she did—and had, perhaps unconsciously, projected a thought-wave to that effect. Certain it is that her first struggles, prompted solely by a fear that in yielding to him she might lose him, were subdued not by his greater physical strength, but by her own rising emotions. Within a few seconds she was no longer resisting him; on the contrary, she took hungrily all he gave, and with greedy lips sought for more.

In a moment the whirlwind had passed. Emotional

experiences are governed by very real laws. They must either progress to sublimer heights or recede to the dull level of satiety. No one has yet devised a means whereby they may be arrested in their course beyond the fleeting moment. Emmy drew back, and with trembling fingers began to poke at her disordered hair. Allington chewed at his mustache and swore softly to himself. Neither said anything for several moments.

Emmy was the first to speak. She was rather angry with herself; she knew that Allington realized the emotional hiatus in her life, and she feared that he might now claim the right to fill it. "Now you've spoiled everything," she said, regarding him with none too steady a gaze.

"Why?" He looked at her searchingly.

"Because—because—well—it's not easy to say, but—we can't go on like this, you know."

"Can we go on," he asked, in level tones, "in any other way?"

She pretended to misunderstand him. "Certainly, as friends."

He grumbled out an exclamation: "Friends! Good Lord! Friends! After *that!*"

"What else is there to do?" She looked at him—clear-eyed—subtly defiant. "Please do not forget, Lord Alfred, that I am a married woman."

The reproof in her tone stung him. "I'm not likely to," he muttered, "though I was not the only one who forgot it—a moment ago."

She almost hated him for reminding her that her virtuous protestations had come just a trifle late. "I think it extremely ungenerous of you to say that," she exclaimed. "It's true that I let you kiss me—even that I may have wanted you to—for the moment." He made a

quick movement toward her, but she put him off. "You are the first man who has kissed me, Lord Allington, since my marriage. I do not pretend to be without feeling, but I hope that I am not without principle. If you care for me, as you say you do, you will not use the fact that I l—like you very much to humiliate and hurt me."

Nothing that she could have said would have made Allington more her slave. She implied that she loved him. She implied that his power over her was something that she could with difficulty resist. And yet she left it to him, put him on his honor, as it were, not to exert that power, thus proving his love for her. All the good in the man, and there was much, rushed to her defence. He took Emmy's hand and kissed it. "Forgive me," he said. "I've been no end of a cad, but I'll prove to you that I *do* love you, by everything I do from now on." He rose with military precision and glanced toward the house. "We had better go in, I think. Your husband may be expecting you."

They had been dining at Lady Wroxeter's. The whole week, since Janet's arrival, had been given over to a round of entertainments planned jointly by Emmy and Helen Napier. The latter seemed devotedly attached to her new friend, and unable to do enough for her.

Lady Wroxeter aided and abetted them both, for she nursed a secret hope that Lord Alfred might be persuaded to marry Janet and her millions. The former, however, much to his mother's disgust, had eyes for no one but Emmy.

As a result, Janet usually found herself left in the hands of George Lennox, and as the latter was a confirmed bachelor, who looked upon marriage as a social blunder, they got along very well. He regaled her with

stories of life in Paris which made her open her eyes in dismay. Lennox prided himself upon invariably calling a spade a spade, and perhaps took a secret delight in shocking the girl. There was nothing coarse about the man; his stories were mild enough, judged by ordinary standards, but some of them brought the color to Janet's cheeks, and made her wonder whether she ought not to refuse to listen to them. She asked Emmy about it, one day. The latter looked at her, much amused. "The truth isn't bad," she said. "Mr. Lennox is a little broad, at times, but he doesn't mean any harm. If you were to object, he'd only think you a prude. Good heavens! Wait until you hear a lot of married women get together some time. Mr. Lennox's stories will sound like Sunday-school lessons."

It was the following day that Ransome got the cablegram which sent him flying back to New York on the first steamer. It informed him that a financial upheaval was impending at home and that some of his largest ventures were likely to become seriously involved. His immediate presence upon the field of action was imperative, if he would save himself from disaster. He insisted that Emmy and Janet should return with him, leaving the yacht to be brought back at leisure by her sailing master and crew.

Emmy was much annoyed by the prospect of returning to New York in March. She was having a delightful time, and by no means desired to see it so soon terminated. Ransome, however, was insistent. In a little over a week they were groping their way up the North River, through a raw, sleety fog that made existence seem grey indeed after the gold and blue of the Mediterranean.

Ransome at once plunged into business affairs with his habitual energy. He toiled for long hours each day at

his office, striving to bring order out of the chaos which confronted him. The task was a difficult one. A shifting of great financial interests, a battle of giants to secure control of enormous railroad and coal properties, had laid his several companies open to destruction. He was forced to throw into the breach every dollar he possessed, and for a time did not know what dawn might find him a pauper. It is to Tyler Ransome's credit that he fought a good fight, fought it well-nigh single-handed, and won. By the beginning of April he had not only weathered the storm, but had brought about certain alliances which made his position more secure, his fortune greater than before.

The price he paid, however, was a heavy one. The unwonted excitement, the long hours of strain after so many months of inactivity, the cold, wet spring, dragged down his vitality to a point where all the countless germ-enemies of mankind found ready hold upon him. Hardly had his task been completed when he found himself confined to his bed with a severe cold. The doctors made light of it to Emmy and Janet, but shook their heads among themselves. Pneumonia, ever ready, they feared hourly would rear its venomous head and demand another victim. Nor were they wrong. Within a week Tyler Ransome was fighting another fight, and this time with an enemy too strong for him. The battle waged unequally, because the man had come to it tired and worn from his previous struggle. Emmy and Janet were appalled by the suddenness with which the blow had fallen. They sat hour after hour at the dying man's side, shuddering at the sufferings which gripped and shook him. To both, death had always seemed a vague, far-away thing; it had never come near to them. The shock of it drove them to each

other for comfort—when the last despairing gasp of the poor trembling lips had driven them sobbing from the room they wept in each other's arms.

This lasted until the time of readjustment, the time when grief turns to the outside world and its affairs for distraction—for consolation. The future, always to be faced, took their thoughts from the past. Both women looked to it, with hope in their eyes, and some measure of love for each other in their hearts. But it was a love born of mutual suffering only; they had, in reality, but little in common, except the millions which constituted the dead man's fortune.

CHAPTER XXI

The period in Emmy's life which followed the death of her husband was, in many ways, the most dull and tiresome she had ever known. She went about, like an early Christian martyr, in her widow's weeds, and almost forgot to wonder whether or not they were becoming to her. A few sidewise glances as she swept through the dining-room of her exclusive hotel might have relieved her mind on this score, but Emmy, for the time being, was too deeply concerned with herself to pay much attention to the people about her, a state of mind which, because of its aloofness, rendered her all the more attractive.

Her mother had come on from Gainesville during Ransome's illness, but she did not remain long. The apartment in the great hotel, flamboyantly expressive of wealth, depressed her. More than ever she felt herself a stranger to her wonderful daughter. With Janet she felt much more at home. There was something simple, restful about the latter's sweet and sympathetic nature which attracted her. At times she found herself looking from Emmy to Janet and wondering what the barrier was that stood between her daughter and herself. She went home, the question unsolved, and told Katie, with tears in her eyes, that she couldn't understand Emmy any longer. This was not at all surprising. Emmy didn't understand herself.

Early in June she opened the house at Elmwood. She hated the great hotel, with its gay parties, of which she

was not one. With Janet as her sole companion, she went dully through the long, hot summer, wondering what was lacking in her life that made it seem so tiresome and empty.

She hated the country. All the night noises—the crickets, the frogs—jarred on her; made her morose and irritable. She hated the aristocratic neighbors who did not call; the fashionable country club that she was not invited to enter.

Janet, on the contrary, seemed entirely in her element. Her grief for her father was deep and sincere—she tried to forget it with her flowers, her dogs, her painting, and by interesting herself in simple and homely things received the reward which such things never fail to give. But Emmy she could not interest in such matters. To the latter flowers were beautiful only as great splashes of color against the green of the lawns or the grey stone of a wall. Individually they meant nothing to her. Dogs she liked to see about, especially aristocratic-looking dogs, because they were picturesque. When the Airedale had a litter of puppies, Emmy could not be induced to go near them. Yet she would at times hug the fuzzy Maltese terrier without understanding the momentary impulse which prompted her to do so.

The greater part of her time she devoted to the preservation and enhancement of her physical charms. An endless round of massaging, hairdressing, bathing, perfuming, polishing, cluttered her life. It was like perfuming the lily, and quite as useless, for Emmy was not yet at the full freshness of her beauty, and could have accomplished the same results far more easily by walking ten miles a day, or busying herself, as Janet did, in the open air. But Emmy hated walking; now that she had unlimited wealth at her command she made of life a thing of

rose-leaves and satin. Her skin, smooth as polished ivory, could endure the touch of none but the filmiest of silken garments. Her boudoir was a bower, sweet-scented, soft-lighted, fluffy with tapestries and laces, a sort of pagan temple, in which she worshipped daily the twin gods of luxury and her physical self. She became like Narcissus, sitting beside the pool, gloating over his own perfections.

She no longer paused to consider the purpose of it all, the end. A fatalistic tendency began to assert itself within her. She sat with folded hands, wondering who would be the next man to revel in the charms she was at such pains to preserve. Would it be Chanler—Lord Allington—who? That it would be some one she knew very well. Utterly bored with existence, she prayed that the Fates might bestir themselves.

In July, in desperation, she wrote a letter to Chanler, sending it to the studio in Tenth Street, in the hope that he might have returned to New York. It was rather a foolish little letter. "I want to see you so much," she wrote. "I'm terribly wretched and lonely, and I hardly know why. Perhaps I'm like Esau, after he had sold his birthright for a mess of red pottage. I'm so glad your book has been such a success. Won't you come and tell me all about it? You know how interested I always was—I feel as though I'd had a hand in it some way. I was certain it would succeed." She fully believed this, as she wrote, forgetting that had she really felt any such certainty she would long ago have been Mrs. Grant Chanler. "I want to see you more than you would believe," she concluded. "Come to me and let's have a nice long talk." It was almost a declaration, but it brought no response.

One day, some two weeks later, she went up to town to do some shopping. It was an idle excuse, or she would

not have found herself walking down lower Fifth Avenue in the neighborhood of Tenth Street. How she loved the old familiar corner. Mechanically she turned toward Sixth Avenue and, ascending the steps of the studio building, went up to Chanler's apartment. She scarcely expected to find him, but wanted to make sure. To her surprise she found Norton in possession. He was unfeignedly glad to see her; the hour was noon and he was just going out to breakfast. Emmy accompanied him—they talked much of the past—she learned that Chanler was living in England, not far from London. She asked Norton, should he write, not to speak of her visit; the idea that Chanler might think that she was pursuing him annoyed her. Her letter, however, had already been forwarded. She invited Norton down to Elmwood, but he did not come. The man was as irresponsible, as much like a flea, as ever. No one could hope to put a finger upon him.

On another occasion, having stopped in at a Broadway hotel for luncheon, she unexpectedly met Mrs. Haines, now, she learned, Mrs. Wilcox. The latter was in a jovial mood. She was in town for the day, ostensibly to see her dentist. She was spending the summer at Narragansett Pier. She invited Emmy to lunch with her.

"I should think you'd be the happiest woman in New York," Mrs. Wilcox laughed, over her cocktail. "Young, good-looking—millions! My! What more do you want?"

"I don't know," said Emmy, sighing. "I don't exactly know."

Mrs. Wilcox inspected her critically. "My dear," she announced at length, "I believe you are in love."

"Am I? With whom, I wonder?"

"You know, I don't doubt. Why don't you marry him? Don't tell me he's got a wife already."

"I don't know who you're talking about."

"Oh, yes, you do. You're certainly in love. No woman with your looks and your income could possibly be unhappy unless she were in love."

Emmy sipped her bouillon reflectively. "I was reading a book the other day that said it is children we really want."

Mrs. Haines smiled. "Isn't it the same thing, my dear? Nature knows what she's about. How she does love to delude us with her emotional bribes. What you want, my dear woman, is a man. Why not be frank and admit it? There are a million like you. We all try to put ourselves off with French poodles, and bridge whist, and votes for women, and settlement work, and society, and clothes, but what we really want is a man. Don't tell me it isn't true. I know. All this dissatisfaction, this yearning for something we don't know what, this nervousness that drives us to cigarettes and cocktails, this desire for careers and the like, comes from one cause. Of course, *why* we want a man is another matter. That's Nature's affair. *She* wants children. Why don't you marry, my dear? You ought not to have much trouble. And for goodness' sake, don't pick out a man this time with one foot in the grave. You want a mate, not a human check-book. Somebody you'll be quite mad about. You'd get over your blues quick enough. What do you say to some broiled mushrooms and lettuce salad with Roquefort cheese dressing?"

That night Emmy got to thinking about Katie. Her sister's boy was nearly a year old. She wondered what the child was like, and determined to go to Gainesville and see. It was a trip which she had contemplated all sum-

mer, but had always put off, dreading the long, hot journey. Physical discomfort was one thing that Emmy would *not* endure. At last she managed to bring herself to the point of being desposited, bag and baggage, upon the waiting train, and the following forenoon found herself descending to the familiar station platform from which she and her mother had embarked for New York but two years before. It was a very different Emmy, however, from the unformed girl who had started out so bravely upon her conquest of the world. Then she had been light-hearted, gay, looking forward with avidity to the great experiences of life. Now she had had them and seemed no richer than before.

She sent her baggage up to Katie's house by the transfer company, and decided to walk—the air—the exercise would be pleasant after the stuffy sleeping-car. She had not advised her mother and sister of her coming—it was to be in the nature of a surprise. She left the station, wondering why it seemed so much smaller and meaner than her memories had painted it. It was an experience which was repeated, again and again, on her walk through the town. The Borden store—she passed it purposely—seemed not one-quarter the size she had believed it to be. The Hoosier Bank Building, pride of Gainesville, was but a miserable affair, not to be mentioned in the same breath with the New York banks. The streets seemed hot—quiet—uninteresting—the people equally so. She began to realize how far the past two years had carried her.

As she walked along, in her costly traveling-suit, she saw that while many people gazed at her curiously, none knew her. Had she changed so much, she wondered. She looked about for Jim Borden, as she passed the hotel, but

he was not in evidence. How mean and dingy the place seemed, how commonplace and dull the few men standing about the entrance. She knew that she hated Gainesville—that she never wanted to see it again—almost for a moment she regretted having come, but the thought of seeing her mother and Katie, and the baby, cheered her. She had always been very fond of her mother, and of late had done much for her. Even the sealskin coat the latter had so long desired had at last become a reality, but Mrs. Moran did not enthuse over it. Like many another ambition, it had been sweeter unattained.

The little house on Willow Avenue was exactly as Emmy had left it, so far as she could judge. It is true that there was a bit of garden blooming in the front yard, where but weeds had grown before—a round of unhappy-looking geraniums, with a cluster of marigolds in the centre. The little gate was open; Emmy ascended the sun-blistered steps and rang the bell.

Katie came to the door, her head tied up in a white cotton cloth, her hands covered with flour. When she saw her sister, she at first started back, confused, then threw her floury arms about her and gave her a great kiss. "Come right into the parlor, dear—I'm *so* glad it's *you*—wait till I wash up and call mother. It's splendid—to see you, Emmy darling. There's the rug you sent—and the piano, and the clock. We couldn't get the settle in—it's out in the barn. Harvey was wondering if you'd mind if we sold it and got a phonograph. He's dying to get one. And here's the two bronze vases—and the gold cup." She displayed all Emmy's various gifts with immense pride. "I don't know what the place would have looked like if it hadn't been for you." She kissed her sister again, unmindful of her perspiring face, the flour

on her hands. "Just sit down, child. I'll take a look at my pies, or they'll be burned. Mother—mother!" she cried, stepping into the tiny front hall. "Come down, quick! Emmy's here! And bring the baby." With a cheery wave of her hand she rushed to the kitchen.

Emmy looked about the queer little room and smiled. A costly Persian rug, one of her gifts, lay side by side with a cheap Smyrna, on which was woven the picture of a huge St. Bernard dog. A gold cup, her present to Harvey, Junior, stood proudly on the parlor mantel, flanked by a pair of weird-looking china dogs. A beautiful mahogany grandfather's clock, which she had sent Katie for her birthday, towered in a corner alongside a book-rack of cheap yellow oak. A glass dome, containing wax flowers, which had once been Mrs. Moran's pride and joy, stood on a brass centre-table with an onyx top. The room made Emmy feel that thousands of years had elapsed since she left Gainesville.

Mrs. Moran came hurrying in, with pathetic eagerness, the baby in her arms. She kissed Emmy, handed her the child, then stood off to admire the picture. Emmy was quite helpless, with no sure knowledge of how to make the youngster comfortable, and the picture was spoiled by Master Harvey's struggles and howls. "Mamma! mamma!" he cried, in a lusty voice, and Mrs. Moran came hurriedly to the rescue. "You ought to have some of your own, Emmy," she said. "Katie's so happy, and Harvey is such a good boy. He's been promoted again—he's head of the hardware department now, and in the spring Katie's going to have a horse. We have a cow now," the old lady went on, proudly, "and Katie makes five pounds of butter every week. She's getting along

wonderfully with her housekeeping—cooks splendidly, and puts up better preserves than *I* ever did."

Katie, coming in at the moment, heard her praises being sung with a pleased smile. "I've put up sixteen jars of peaches and three dozen of tomatoes, and some raspberry jam—Harvey is so fond of jam—and the best currant jelly, Emmy, that you ever tasted, and I have eighteen Rhode Island Reds—and get all the eggs I can use and have a lot to sell besides." She drew young Master Harvey into the folds of her cheap gingham dress and slyly handed him a cookie. "Don't you think he's a wonderful boy for his age, Emmy? He actually knows one of his letters already." She sat down and taking a magazine from the table called on the child to pick out "A," but he would have none of it. He stared, wide-eyed, intent, at Emmy, apparently fascinated by her. "Itty—itty," he gurgled. Katie clasped him to her breast. "Oh, Emmy, isn't that just too sweet! He said 'pretty—pretty.'"

When Emmy came to Gainesville she had intended to stay a week, but she went back in three days. It was not that she was not glad to be with her mother and sister, but somehow she seemed so little a part of the life they led. Katie was busy from morning till night, cooking, dusting, tending the chickens, feeding the cow at noon, weeding her little flower garden—no moments for her spelled idleness, and yet she sang at her work from breakfast to supper, like a care-free child. Emmy marveled greatly—she herself did not feel in the least like singing. She wondered what secret of happiness Katie had found that she had failed to grasp.

The evenings, though she found them inexpressibly dull, were, happily, short. Harvey arose at five, to spend two

hours or more before breakfast in his tiny garden, or doing countless other chores about the place, hence going to bed at nine or, at the latest, ten was imperative. Emmy marveled at the change in him. From a thin, anemic, reedy-looking youth, he had become a sturdy, ruddy, self-reliant man. He did not have much to say to Emmy—his talk was of the store—of the gossip of the town—of politics—beyond the little world in which he lived he seemed to have but few interests. Emmy was surprised that Katie was not bored with him, but it was quite evident that she adored him.

Emmy bought everything that she could think of for all the members of the family, spent three restless nights upon a bed which seemed hard and uncomfortable after the downy mattresses to which she was accustomed, and departed, wondering if the eternal smell of cooking would ever get out of her nostrils, her clothes, her hair. Clearly, this life, whatever it offered to Katie, was not for her.

On her return to New York she came to a sudden determination. She would sell the place at Elmwood and go to live in England. A letter from Helen Napier was perhaps the deciding cause. The latter begged her to come and make her a visit in London, or after that at Walsingham Court, the Wroxeters' Surrey place, where Lady Napier was to stay during the autumn. She suggested that Emmy take a delightful old house, "The Beeches," at Tavistone, not far from the Court, which was to let, furnished. Here they could be near each other—see each other—Emmy would want to be quiet, of course, on account of her mourning, but Lady Wroxeter and herself would be overjoyed to have her and Janet near them. Lord Alfred, it appeared, had been shooting in India for the past six months, but was expected home at any

moment. It was perhaps this fact that prompted the invitation, at least Lady Wroxeter's part in it. Now that Emmy was a widow, the countess argued, she was no less eligible as a daughter-in-law than Janet herself. She extended a personal request to Emmy to come.

It was so decided. Emmy acted promptly, once her mind was made up. She placed the matter of the sale of the Elmwood property in the hands of her lawyer, and by the first week in September she and Janet were watching the Long Island shore as it slowly sank below the dun-colored clouds in the west. America had always seemed dun-colored to Emmy. She walked forward, her face to the east ,the land of promise, and Chanler.

She and Emmy came to know each other better on this trip than they had at any time up to now. They held long discussions each day on deck upon the overshadowing subject of love. It was a subject now uppermost in Emmy's mind; she craved it—longed for it, and hence—talked about it incessantly.

One day she unburdened her soul to Janet and told her all—almost all—about Chanler and herself. She did not tell the girl that she still loved Chanler, but Janet was not slow to infer it. Emmy's confidences caused her to sit quiet for a long time, gazing at the grey-green water as it ceaselessly flung itself against the vessel's side. "Do you think he still cares for you?" she asked at length.

Emmy was puzzled as to the best answer to make to this question. At last she sought refuge in evasion. "I don't know, Janet," she said. "Probably not, or he would have come to me long ago. Mr. Chanler is a very strange man. I'm afraid I don't entirely understand him. He has been spoiled, I think, by having too many women care for him."

This was news to Janet. "And do you think he has cared—about them?"

"Oh, no. Sometimes I think that he's never been in love at all. He writes about it readily enough, about love, and women, and such things, but I don't really think that he understands them. Men who theorize a lot about women never do. They get all mixed up with a lot of complex ideas, and imagine that women are some sort of an unsolvable mystery. They aren't. They're as simple as two and two making four. We're all built on the same plan, at heart, and we all want the same thing."

"You mean love?" asked Janet, quietly.

"Yes, I suppose you might call it that. The satisfying of our emotional needs. I think it's largely a question of sex."

"Don't," said Janet, gently, "don't say such things."

"Why not, if they are true? Sex is the only thing that really appeals to a man. They pretend to admire brains and character and all that, but sex is the thing that really counts. Nature made it that way, I suppose, and you can't alter it. I'm not very old, but I've seen what men want. Take my advice, Janet, and make yourself just as attractive to men, physically, as you know how—that is, if you want to marry."

"I don't want to make myself anything but what I am. I don't pretend to be made of ice, but I think that passion should come last, in love, not first. I don't agree with Mr. Chanler on that point."

"You're wrong, my dear. A man can learn to love a woman if she appeals to him, physically, but a man can't come to be physically fond of a woman, just because he admires her character."

"I'm afraid I don't just understand what you mean by

love," ventured Janet, after a while. "I should want the man I cared for to be big, and strong, and fine in every way, and I should want to feel his arms about me, too, but beyond all that I should want him to be tender, and gentle, and kind, with sympathy for all things that suffer. And then, too, I should want him to be very loyal and true—I can imagine caring for such a man quite apart from any physical regard for him—when all such things had passed away and only just love, in its biggest sense, remained."

Emmy smiled a superior smile. "That's just theory—just old-fashioned sentiment. Men have been teaching women that sort of thing for ages. But it isn't true. When a woman ceases to hold a man, physically, she loses him. He may respect her, and admire her, and like to talk to her, but put him to the test and the first woman with beauty—with the mysterious power of sex attraction—that comes along will make him forget every vow he's ever made. The history of the world proves it."

"I'd hate to believe anything so terrible," said Janet, shuddering. "All men are not like that. Your brother-in-law, Mr. Cook, isn't, from what you tell me."

Emmy was silent. In this particular instance she knew that Janet was right. Then she essayed to be clever. "Lots of people are good, I suppose, because they are never tempted. Harvey's a dear fellow, but"—she tilted her pretty nose—"I couldn't imagine any woman taking the trouble to steal him."

"But aren't most men, after all, good at heart, and most women, too? You see, perhaps you have met just certain types—men who are out of the ordinary, like Mr. Chanler, although I don't know him well enough to say. But aren't the great majority of men true, and honest, and faithful to their wives?"

"Certainly not," Emmy asserted. "The great majority of them are anything else."

Janet said nothing, reserving, in silence, her own opinion. "As for virtue in women," Emmy went on, "what, after all, is it? Certainly not lack of desire. I agree with Mr. Chanler that women—even what the world calls good women—have very much the same feelings and desires as men."

"Then why do they remain virtuous?" asked Janet. "Why do you—why do I?"

"Because, my dear, virtue in a woman is an asset, and the woman who loses it is a drug in the matrimonial market. That's why?"

"Oh, no, I can't believe it. I'm sure that isn't *my* reason. I want to be as I am because I just couldn't be otherwise—I'd lose my self-respect."

"You've never been tempted, dear," said Emmy, drily, as a steward came up with bouillon. "That makes a difference, you know."

The discussion left Janet singularly disquieted. Her mother had been a simple-hearted, good woman, who had taught her daughter to believe that most men are honest—most women virtuous. Much of Emmy's precious worldly wisdom Janet therefore refused to accept, but conversations of this nature had their effect. She did not know that Emmy had not yet learned either wisdom, or truth.

CHAPTER XXII

It was at Lady Napier's house in Oxford Street that Emmy and Janet spent their first few weeks in London. On account of their mourning, they took no part in the gaieties of the fast-waning London season. Motor rides and visits to the shops constituted their chief amusements. Emmy thought the latter adorable.

Lord Alfred, back from his tiger shooting in India, at once began a new and more exciting sport—the pursuit of Emmy. His new quarry he found somewhat more wary than the tigers had been and scarcely less dangerous.

His admiration was outspoken: she had not been in London twenty-four hours before he had asked her to marry him. He came at her in his usual hammer-and-tongs fashion, reminded her of their last talk, on the terrace at Monte Carlo, and proposed on the spot. "I said I would wait for you, you know," he urged, "and I would have, if it had been ten years. But it wasn't, after all, and I'm the luckiest dog alive. Will you have me, Emmy, when the year is up?"

She assumed an air of pensive grief, and put him off. "I'll let you know—then," she told him, and refused to commit herself further. The result was, of course, that he wanted her more than ever. She would not even let him kiss her, greatly to his surprise and disappointment.

"By Jove!" he confided to Lennox that night at the club, "she seems to have changed a lot these past few months. Quieter, you know, and sadder, and all that. Do you

think she could have cared anything about the old duffer, after all?"

"Maybe she's in love with somebody else," said Lennox, carelessly. It was entirely a shot in the dark, but it had a blighting effect upon Allington's spirits for the remainder of the evening. It took Lennox two hours to explain that he had no grounds whatever for the remark. The next day, Allington sent twice as many orchids as usual and spent half the day at his tailor's.

Emmy, not at all certain as to what she wanted to do, toyed with him, inflaming his love by her indifference. All the time she secretly hoped that she might hear something of Chanler. She read the papers with eager interest, but not a line concerning him could she discover.

She was by no means indifferent to Allington. The man's admiration flattered her vanity, nor did she lose sight of the fact that a marriage with him would make her, later on, a peeress of England. He, on his part, was no more indifferent to the fact that she was the possessor of many millions. And, in spite of these material considerations on either side, they liked each other immensely. Allington naturally desired Emmy—all men did who came within reach of her spells. She liked him because he was handsome, and jolly, and full of fun, and understood to a nicety the art of appealing to and pleasing women. His combination of tender sentiment and primitive brutality was well-nigh irresistible—he came, in one hand a club, in the other a bouquet of flowers. What woman can resist the combination? Emmy did so only because she wanted Chanler, and even then the temptation to succumb was great. Allington was so big, so strong, so masterful—and at the same time so gentle and tender. The contest between the two was highly illuminating, and Janet watched

it with great inward enjoyment. However much she might disapprove of Emmy, and she had never come to be very fond of her, she could not but admire the consummate skill with which she forced Allington to lay his club at her feet, after which she proceeded to despoil him of his flowers with the airs and graces of a spoiled child. He followed her about with the faithfulness of a camel, than which no creature is capable of more lasting attachment. Occasionally he would pretend to be angry and sulk for a time, but he always came submissively back and pursued her with redoubled energy.

At last Emmy, enraptured with the aristocratic and titled society of which her position as Lady Napier's guest afforded her occasional glimpses, began to fear that by playing with Allington too long she might end by losing him. One evening, when he had been unusually violent in his love-making, she suddenly made up her mind to accept him. After all, she reasoned, she could throw him over later on should she so desire. Allington treated her to a succession of bear hugs that left her breathless, and departed in a state of rapture.

On the following evening he returned, in an equal state of gloom. He had been down to Washington Court in the interim and had had a talk with the old earl, who detested Americans as much as he did Wagnerian opera, which was saying a good deal. Their interview had not been a pleasant one.

"You see," Lord Alfred explained, "I had the beastly luck to strike him on one of his gouty days. Might as well have tried to argue with the town pump. All he would say was: 'Who is she—who is she?' over and over, like a bally parrot. As though he were going to marry you himself."

Emmy regarded him coldly. "Any one might suppose he *was*," she remarked. "Is it customary for men of your age, in England, to ask their father's consent when they marry?"

"Well—you see—it's not exactly that, of course. I can marry whom I please, you know—rather. But I'm the heir and all that, and one does prefer to have peace in the family, don't you know."

"I see. Well—there's no hurry. When your father gives his consent——" She broke off, laughing in spite of herself. Lord Alfred's six feet of English manhood sprawled across a divan, struck her for the moment as ridiculously funny.

"Oh, I say now!" he remonstrated. "Don't make game of me like that. There isn't the slightest reason why we shouldn't be married to-morrow, if you like. Only I thought, as long as I come in for the title and all that, it would be better to have the old gentleman in a good humor. He'll come around—never fear, once the mater gets after him."

"Your mother is favorable, then, I take it?" remarked Emmy, sweetly.

"Rather. She's a good sort, is the mater. Liked you from the start, of course. So would the governor, if he'd ever seen you."

"Did you tell him I had a million pounds?" Emmy inquired, ruthlessly.

"Of course I did. He said it would take that to keep up the estate."

"H-m!" She sat for a long time, her chin on her hand, thinking. Allington began to wonder what he had said that could have offended her. "Of course, I don't

care a rap about the money," he blurted out, presently. "It's you I want, Emmy. Hang the estate, anyway!"

She sent him away and went up to her room, where she lay on the bed a long time, thinking. How straight, how marvelously easy had been the course she had mapped out for herself, and how little, after all, it had brought her! Such a little while before she had been lying on her bed in her dingy room in Gainesville, reading endless romances of life among the British aristocracy, and wondering if she, too, might not some day pass those almost heavenly portals. And now the way lay open. She had bartered herself for Ransome's millions; she had only to barter the millions for a coronet and the thing was done. Somewhere in her sub-conscious mind she heard the ceaseless clatter of a typewriter, and Chanler's clear voice, dictating. All of a sudden she realized that she had never known happiness, although she knew that it had passed over her and brushed her with its wings. She undressed and crawled into bed, shivering. The soft touch of her silk nightdress consoled her somewhat. Lennox had told her, one day, that even a successful novelist rarely makes over two thousand pounds a year.

She and Janet moved down to "The Beeches" about this time—a lovely old-fashioned manor house, dating from the reign of Elizabeth. Its modern furnishings, its air of luxury and wealth, pleased Emmy vastly—and, then, Walsingham Court was but a short distance away, and in spite of the earl's opposition to Emmy as a daughter-in-law, both Lady Wroxeter and Helen Napier welcomed her with open arms. There were many quiet little lunches, teas, motor rides, during the lovely autumn weeks, and the atmosphere of wealth and exclusiveness in which Emmy moved intoxicated her, and made her come to forget

Chanler, and to share Lord Alfred's hope that ere long the earl would withdraw his opposition. Alfred was anxious to marry her out of hand, without the parental blessing, but Emmy insisted that he obtain it. She did not wish to enter the family circle unwelcomed.

Janet, with no great love for the idle life in which she now found herself, took it into her head to again take up her painting. She had made fair progress with her brushes while in Paris. Through the good offices of George Lennox, she was taken as a pupil by one of the most noted artists in London, and spent her days over her easel, coming up to town by an early train each morning and returning, tired but happy, each afternoon. Occasionally Lennox took her to luncheon—she found him a most unselfish and devoted friend. Thus life moved along slowly and uneventfully with both herself and Emmy until the coming of Grant Chanler.

CHAPTER XXIII

One day, early in October, Lennox had dragged Janet off to a queer little French restaurant in Soho, where, he asserted, one could get the best *potage de santé* in London. Janet had not reached the age when soups are a deciding factor in matters of lunching, but she loved the atmosphere of the place, with its funny military-looking bushes, in green boxes, at the doorway, its cobwebby ceilings, and generally dissolute appearance.

Lennox was speaking of a dinner the night before at a noted club of literary folk. "I met a charming chap there," he rambled on. "Countryman of yours, by the way. Sat between Allington and me."

"Who was it?" Janet was not particularly interested.

"Name's Chanler—Grant Chanler. Rising young novelist, with ideas in his head."

Janet crumbled her roll in silence. At the mention of Chanler's name something rose within her and gripped at her heart.

"Yes, I—I know him," she said, rather faintly.

"By Jove! do you? How strange! One of the most interesting chaps I've met in years. I'm going to meet him at the Savoy, at four, for tea. He's going to give me some information about political conditions—you know I'm doing a special article on the socialistic movement in the States. Why not come along?"

At first Janet thought she wouldn't. "I'd only be in the way," she objected.

"Not in looks, except that you are even more charming," he replied, gallantly, "but you have broadened—you have thought more—you are less of a child—what has happened to you, I wonder?" He spoke gaily, but with sincere meaning. The girl had become a woman, and something within her grave eyes told him that she had suffered.

"My father," she began, softly.

"Forgive me. I have been thoughtless." He hastened to repair his blunder, yet felt that the cause she assigned was not the real one. They fell to talking at length about his work, his plans. He had just completed a new novel—his months at a quiet country home in Essex had been months of hard work. Now he had come up to London to play for a while—would she play—with him? The prospect delighted her, although she feared to show it. "I hope we shall see each other often. You must come down to Tavistone, too."

He frowned. "I'd rather not, if you don't mind. I can't explain, but—your stepmother and I jar on each other a bit at times."

She was glad of his answer. She had asked him to come largely to find out whether or not he would. There was not much of guile in Janet, but, after all, she was a woman, and in love.

"If you don't have to paint *all* day," he laughed, "we might take a look through the shops this afternoon. I've got to buy a little present—for my mother," he added, by way of explanation. "Her birthday is only two weeks off, and I want to post it by Monday's steamer. I'd like to have your help."

She liked him for his thought of his mother, and gladly consented to go with him and assist in the purchase. Just to be near him she found a great happiness—there was

something in his personality which stimulated her, compelled her admiration—her love.

They walked toward Bond Street, chatting gaily, like two old friends. "I love London," he confided to her. "It seems so much wiser and kinder than New York."

"Perhaps that is because it is older," said Janet. "Wisdom and kindliness come with age, don't they? Youth, even in cities, is apt to be so cruel, so intolerant."

He glanced at her, surprised at the depth of her thought. Clearly, she was no longer a child. "I think that is true. Youth acts—age thinks. People here understand better how to live—how to get the most out of life. And there is more real freedom, too. Look at that." He pointed to the street, where the two endless waves of traffic stood halted before the upraised finger of a policeman. "That's what makes the English free—the majesty of the law, and obedience to it. Laws are made to guarantee the public's rights. Only where they are constantly broken do you find real oppression. Our trusts, our countless murders, our political system, all prove that."

She had not thought of the matter in that light before—obedience to the law making people free. It was a new point of view.

"Would you rather live over here," she asked, "than at home?"

"No, I can't say that I should. You see, I'm trying to prove certain things, in my writings—things that may help a little, to make people think and see. Women, particularly. It's a big task, isn't it?" he laughed.

"You believe women should vote, I suppose?"

"Yes, but not because I think their vote will change matters any, politically. To do that women, as a class,

would have to be both more intelligent and more honest than men, and I do not believe that they are either."

"Then why should they vote?"

"Because it will teach them to think. That is the great trouble with women to-day. They do not think—largely because they've never been trained to do so. Think—and work."

Janet remembered her conversation on the steamer with Emmy. "Most women seem to believe that they should appeal to men with their beauty, not their brains."

He turned suddenly. "That is the gist of the whole matter. That belief makes your sex a race of parasites. They offer us one thing only, and then complain because we demand no more. There is only one way in which women can emancipate themselves from the burden of the centuries. They must put aside the idea that their only attraction is one of sex."

"I've always tried to believe that," Janet said, quietly, "but somehow it does seem as though the women who are physically most attractive usually win in the end." She was thinking of Emmy and could not keep from her voice a trace of bitterness.

"Win what?" asked Chanler, quietly. "Certainly not happiness. You'll find that out, as you grow older." He, too, was thinking of Emmy. He had received her letter, forwarded by Norton.

In selecting the present for his mother they fell into a lighter view. "Mother just dotes on opals," he told her. "I saw a brooch down here the other day that I'm sure she'll love."

"But aren't opals considered unlucky?"

"So they say, but mother firmly believes that they bring her good luck. She thinks that proves she isn't super-

stitious, and can't see the humor of it. You'd love mother. She's so delightfully old-fashioned—not a single new idea. I think you're a lot like her."

Janet laughed. "Don't you think I have any new ideas?" she asked.

"Have you? What are they?"

"Oh, well, I—I'd smoke a cigarette if I wanted to."

"That isn't new. Getting to be really quite commonplace, in fact. And then, you *don't* want to."

"How do you know I don't?" she asked, teasingly.

He laughed. "How do I know that you don't ride astride, and drink cocktails, and dance the turkey trot? I just know it. Your tastes don't run that way, I suppose."

"Would you be surprised if I told you that I have done all three?"

"No, not that you have—once. But that you *do*—I confess that would surprise me very much."

"They're not such terrible things."

"Certainly not. I know any number of most delightful women who do them. I was speaking of you. Such things somehow don't fit—*you*."

"But I thought you were in favor of women being emancipated?"

"Aping men will never emancipate them, or dancing indecent dances. I know I shouldn't bore you with my theories, but women who really think, who realize what a great work they have to do in the world—their world—don't begin by trying to be like men. That doesn't help them any, or the men, either. Women who take life seriously—who want to be something more than dressed-up dolls, or absurd caricatures—haven't time to be 'new women.' They are too busy trying to be just—women—

real women. But it's absurd for me to inflict all this on you." He smiled at her, indulgently.

"I suppose you think me nothing but a child," she said, resenting his smile.

"Aren't we all children, after all? Isn't youth the best thing we have? Don't we all try to hold on to it as long as possible? One gets so tired of sophisticated women, who imagine they have nothing to learn. Don't be ashamed of your youth. Be proud of it. It will go soon enough." He looked tenderly at her sweet, unspoiled face. "You will make some man very happy, some day, because of it."

The thought, from his lips, made her tremble. "I hope I shall," she said. "I shall try very hard."

He pressed her arm as they left the jewelry shop. "I don't think *you* are the one that will have to try," he said. "The man will have to do that."

This day was the first of many other happy days—happy at least for Janet, and, it seemed to her, for him, too, as they got to know each other better. She usually had either lunch of tea with him every day, and they went about, seeing the sights of the great city, with all the enthusiasm of a pair of children. Chanler, his work for the time being finished, threw himself into the little holiday joyously, happy to find in Janet such a delightfully sympathetic and ingenuous companion. She was as pleased with tea and cake at sixpence as she would have been with a royal banquet, in spite of her father's millions, and she preferred riding on the tops of buses, she said, because one always seemed to find such queer and interesting people on them. All people, and especially children, interested her—she often spoke to Chanler of her wish to do something with the money her father had left

her, to help the thousands of unhappy little waifs, whose playground was the pavement, whose only knowledge of streams was of those which flowed in the gutters. In this desire she was actuated by no ambition to become a philanthropist—it arose from her intense love for and sympathy with all human kind, and especially with those who bore the burden of sorrow and suffering. The largeness, the nobility of her nature, in this respect, caused Chanler to come to admire her as greatly as he liked her for her simplicity, her gentle humor, her comradeship. He looked forward to their meetings each day with renewed interest, and realized, when Sundays came, and he could not see her, how dull the day could be without her. Yet even now he did not admit to himself that the feeling he had for her was one of love. As a matter of fact, Chanler had theorized so much about love in the abstract that when the rare and tender beauty of the reality came to him he failed to recognize it, and confused it with friendship.

George Lennox, who occasionally accompanied them on their little expeditions, was the first to suspect the truth, and he began to tease Chanler about it good-naturedly, in spite of the latter's denials. He was genuinely fond of them both and hoped that his suspicions were well founded. He happened to meet Emmy in Bond Street one afternoon—she had been lunching in town with Lady Napier, and as they strolled toward the milliner's shop whither the former was leisurely bound, he took occasion to refer, in a jocular way, to Janet's newly found friend. He had no idea that Emmy had any tender feeling for Chanler, and did not observe the momentary pallor which crossed her face, or the huskiness which crept into her voice as she asked him more about the matter. He supposed that

Emmy knew all about it, and when she told him that she had known Mr. Chanler for years, he made no comment, although he wondered that Chanler had never mentioned her during their many talks. He told Emmy that he was even then on his way to join the two at tea, and suggested, laughingly, that she should go along.

The latter consented at once, a rather hard look in her wonderful eyes. "Never mind about the hat I was going to look at—I can see it some other time." She seemed eager to reach the tea-room as quickly as possible—Lennox wondered at the rapidity of her stride.

They found Chanler and Janet in a laughing discussion of a new play by Shaw, which the former had brought for her to read. Janet, facing the entrance, was the first to see Emmy and Lennox as they came in. "My stepmother is coming, with Mr. Lennox," she said, in a low voice to Chanler. The warning enabled him to turn to Emmy, as he rose, with an almost impassive face. He could not make it quite so—the memory of their last parting, the bitterness of it, the hurt, lay too deep for complete dissimulation. Even Emmy, for all her coolness, felt the shock of the meeting far more keenly than she had anticipated. It raised within her a great longing, a desire for the man, one which had, in fact, always been there, although at times dormant. Her head swam a bit, as she took the chair he offered her. Over tea and muffins, however, aided by Lennox's light talk, the event passed without significance to the others—Janet, of course, knew that doors long closed were being opened—old memories stirred, but of the results she could tell but little.

At the expiration of half an hour they rose to go. Emmy and Janet were to take a cab to the station, the

two men were bound for Lennox's club. As they passed from the room, Emmy held back for a moment, with Chanler—her gloves had dropped beneath the table. In a few moments they had rejoined the others, but the brief separation had given Emmy time to ask Chanler to come down to Tavistone to see her the following Friday evening. It was four days off—she made it so, realizing that in some way she would be obliged to get rid of Allington and of Janet. At first Chanler hesitated—was about to attempt some excuse, but she would not permit it. "I shall expect you," she said. "I have something important that I must say to you. I shall be alone." She saw from his face, as they joined the others, that he would come.

She said nothing to Janet on the way down to Tavistone about her invitation, and she felt reasonably sure that Chanler would not do so, either. Not that it mattered much, she thought, but still she felt certain that he would not speak of it. Her manner while asking him had intimated much that her lips had not said. Had she not told him that she would be alone? She knew that Helen Napier intended to invite Janet and herself to dinner on Friday night—she would accept for them both—a sudden indisposition would at the last moment prevent her from going, and then—and then—she spent almost the entire journey down to Tavistone in elaborating, in her imagination, upon that "and then."

Janet, watching the browning hillsides and the yellow fields of stubble from the carriage window, was lost in a sea of troubled thought. Emmy was free, and she loved Chanler. Did Chanler love her? Would he succumb, she wondered, to the very sex attraction of which but a few days before he had spoken so lightly? There

had been a look on his face, when Emmy entered the tea-room that afternoon, which had made the girl's heart for the moment stand still. There was a look on Emmy's face even now which reflected the thoughts which raced through her brain. It was almost a feline expression; it filled Janet with a sense of impending disaster.

CHAPTER XXIV

The night fell clear and cold, with the presage of early frost in the brilliant stars, the still blue sky. Emmy, in her pink and gold boudoir, was making herself ready for her meeting with Chanler, with a sure prescience that the night held within its hurrying moments the message of her future.

He was to come at nine, and she had made herself very beautiful for his coming. Always before she had been content to sit serene in her power, attracting men without effort. To-night she trembled with the fulness of her purpose, her determination, to compel his love, his admiration, his desire.

Never in all her life had she been more beautiful. Her gown, seemingly but a bit of moonlit cobweb that had drifted about her sinuous figure, gave to her loveliness all the mystery of the almost seen—the all but revealed. The thought of him—of his coming, made her gleam—she exuded a radiance of conscious power, like a phosphorescence; it shone in her eyes—her face—adding a dominant note to her beauty. She seemed to possess the power to feel of a hundred women—it choked her with its intensity; through it she felt she had reached heights above ordinary mortals, heights they could not even sense, so wonderfully had the touch of this man's personality affected her.

Never in all her life had she been more beautiful. She waited for him, like a panther in the lush grass. In her ears sounded the beat of tom-toms—she felt the hot

breath of wide desert spaces—in her heart rose incessantly the cry of the woman for the man—and yet, when she had steeled herself to the task, and had written a note to Allington, definitely breaking off their engagement, she feared to have it delivered. Some weakness within her—unrecognized, undefined—made her place the letter in her desk, unsent. There would be time enough, after, she thought. She had not the courage to burn her bridges.

She went down to the formal English drawing-room, with its tapestried hangings, its cold blue and gold walls, and shivered. This was no place for the battle she sought to wage. Back of it a small Moorish room invited with its jeweled lamp, its silk rugs, its soft, wide divan, its air of intimate mystery. Here she would await him.

Chanler, flying down from London after a hasty dinner with Lennox, knew nothing of the web which had been spread for his snaring. He wondered that Emmy desired this evening with him—he had been half-tempted, at times, to send her word that he could not come—but some tug of the old desire for her at his heart sent him over early to the station, even while he wondered at his impetuosity.

It had always been Chanler's fate to have women love him. Some spark of genius lay within the man, which projected itself, like a radium emanation, and affected all those who came in contact with him. With men it took the form of enthusiasm for his work. With women, the impulse became that of love. Under its inspiration they seemed for the time being possessed of a divine fire—it manifested itself in their bearing—their words—the letters they wrote him. The stimulus once removed, these women returned to their former humdrum existence, with singularly vivid memories of a brief time during which they had lived with the gods.

His friends, who knew of his power with women, joked about it—compared it to a contagion—a disease—yet Chanler was conscious of no such power. He gave his best, of sympathy, of understanding, to all women—they gave him in return the material, the experiences, which the seeker after truth forever demands. He was, in a way, a soul surgeon, probing mercilessly, without thought of the victim's sufferings. The very effort of stimulating others stimulated himself—some women gave him a thought—some a type—some a new point of view. He took from them all, in whatever station in life, with the high selfishness of the artist. They were to him what models are to the sculptor, supplying a profile—a torso, a curve of the cheek; and models they remained, although each and every one desired to become his whole life's work and end. His mother once compared him to the Prince in "Cinderella," forever going about with a slipper which he tried on every woman, with the result that it *always fitted.* This was, however, not true, although he unconsciously made every woman think so. And, with all this, Chanler had never been in love. His affair with Emmy had come nearest to it—he thoroughly believed that he loved her most devotedly, and came to her this night almost with arms open to her. Yet far back in his brain there dwelt a doubt—a doubt which at times crept forth and mocked him—at other times seemed buried beneath the weight of his longing for her. This doubt—this secret fear of her filled him with annoyance. He often went back, in retrospect, to their tragic parting in the little apartment on Eighty-first Street. At such times he alternately blamed and forgave her—blamed her for her cold-blooded sale of herself to Ransome—forgave her because of the

love which had caused her to offer herself to *him*. Also, at most times he blamed himself—why had he not taken her—then—and held her forever, against Ransome—against the world—against even herself? He knew that he could have done it—why had he not done it?—the thought tortured him ceaselessly: all the way down from London.

Now he felt that it was too late. He had no surety that Emmy still cared for him—rumors had reached him—vague remarks by Janet, by Lennox, which led him to believe that she was, on the contrary, very much in love with Allington. And, then, there was Janet. He had thought of her much of late. Some strong emotion had grown up within him toward the girl—it did not seem love, as he understood it—he had no consuming desire to crush her in his arms—it was more like a gentle and tender friendship—yet stronger than any friendship he had ever known. He thought about it a good deal, on his way down to Tavistone—the only conclusion at which he arrived was that should he, by any chance, not see Janet again it would leave in his life a very great void.

Emmy, waiting for his coming, found the moments winged with stone. The Moorish room oppressed her. She called one of the servants and informed him that she would not be at home to any one that evening, except to Mr. Chanler, then went again to her boudoir. She had dined very early—it still wanted nearly an hour to the appointed time.

She sat down at her desk and drew from one of its drawers a jumble of papers, odd scraps, upon which, ever since her meeting with Chanler on Monday, she had been scribbling him imaginary letters, writing down, in groping words, the thoughts with which his nearness never failed

to inspire her. They seemed like bits of her soul, breathing her inmost desires. No other man that she had met inspired her to anything beyond the dull commonplaces of life—Chanler invariably whirled her into a creative turmoil, which drove her to some form of self-expression. The man's own power to create seemed to impel others to do likewise—perhaps the response in her was but a warped manifestation of a larger creative principle, which contemplated not the creation of word pictures, but of life.

She began idly to read over what she had written, finding in the hastily scrawled words food for the flame which consumed her. She was reminded of her feelings on that other occasion, when Chanler had left her to go to Europe. Now, however, her emotions were stronger, deeper, for in the interval she had eaten of the fruit of the tree of knowledge.

"I have been reading over again your wonderful book. I marvel at your understanding of the little things—the little, hidden, mighty things—what woman could read this story and not know that you had been a lover—a ravisher —of the truths—the knowledge of life."

* * * * * * * * *

"The hours drag—I have been reading to-night of President Jackson's love for Peggy O'Neal—lately, since our meeting, I have been filled with a desire to consume the love lives of great men. Last night it was Napoleon and the Countess Walewska—the night before, de Balzac and Evelina Hanska. Even George Sand I have loved and wept with. Could I, Grant, hope to be to you what she was to Chopin, to De Musset? I wonder. Have I the mind—the intellect to hold you?"

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"Yesterday I could not read. Thoughts of you kept me awake half the night. I seem to be drifting—drifting—toward some wonderful future of which I can only dream."

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"Now that I know you are actually coming to me—that a definite time has been set, I can scarcely wait—always at the back of my brain beats and pounds your presence—the haunting *face* of you. I seem to be living in a constant fluctuation between a quivering, exhilarating anticipation, and a sickening dread that some fate may intervene to take you from me again, as it took you from me before. My God, *how* I want you!"

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"Come to me, Grant—there are so many things I want to whisper to you, with my arms locked about you—things that lie hidden in the deepest recesses of my heart—things which no one but you has ever touched."

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"I really believe the sense is coming to me, at last, of why love has been sounded and sung through the ages. I seem like one of these queer glass Chinese wind harps—a whisper—a thought of you sends almost endless vibrations tinkling through my being."

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"There has been a fire of hot coals back of my eyes for days now."

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"Grant, think of all we have missed—all the days and nights—the hot, velvety peace of them—it maddens me. I ache with longing for you."

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"Think of me always—hold me—hold me always—and

come to me—I want you—I need you—I must have you."

* * * * * * * * *

At last she got through all the years of that night, and Chanler came. She stood in the open doorway at the entrance to the Moorish room and watched him as he approached her. Her first feeling was one of chill—of disappointment. She had expected him to run to her—to take her in his arms—almost she held her own out to him. His conventional greeting swept her like a cold wind—she gave him her hand—icy—numb—he bent over it, with a singular feeling of constraint.

The dismay which overcame her was akin to stage fright and left her for the moment without words. She stepped to the door of the Moorish room and drew aside the curtain. "Let us sit in here," she said. "It's so much more comfy."

The momentary shock of their meeting passed, leaving them both at ease. Emmy sank upon the couch, Chanler into a deep leather chair beside her. "You may smoke," she said, indicating a tabouret upon which were cigarettes and an alcohol lamp.

For a while they talked of commonplace things, of his book, his success, his wanderings during the past year, but both knew that it was not for this that they had met.

At last Emmy broke the ice. "It seems so good to see you again, Grant." She used his Christian name softly—caressingly, as she had been wont to do in the past. "I have been very lonely."

"So have I. It has been a long time. I have wondered about you so often."

"I wrote to you, Grant. Why did you not come before?"

"I did not know that you were in London—until a few days ago."

"What have you been doing—all this time?"

"Just wandering about— trying to find—myself."

"Only yourself, Grant?" She looked at him, her great translucent eyes like smouldering green fires.

He read their message, and it troubled him. "What else could I hope to find—after——" He paused—uncertain.

"After that terrible night? Oh, Grant—how could I have ever done such a thing—how could I?"

He made no reply, simply gazing at her hungrily. The perfume of her body, the radiance—the subtle exhalations of her had begun to mount to his brain, to confuse his senses.

Suddenly she leaned toward him—her face close to his. Her voice trembled, low, intense. "Can you ever forgive me, Grant? Can you ever forgive me?"

He put out his hand, as though to take hers, then withdrew it. "I have forgiven you," he said, "or I should not be here."

This made her smile, happily. "You are so big—so fine! God! what a fool I was! I can't understand—I can't explain—I sold everything that was dear to me—for—this." She swept her hand largely about the richly furnished room. Upon her fingers glowed a wonderful ring—a great emerald, with clustering diamonds. Chanler could not keep his eyes from it—the effect of its sparkling reflection was almost hynotic.

"Perhaps the fault was mine," he replied. "I should have held you—have saved you from yourself—from the folly in your heart. I failed." The old passion was creeping fast into his quickening blood. "If I only had it to do over again."

His words overjoyed her. She felt that he was right—that the fault had, indeed, been his. How like Emmy this attitude was—how much easier to blame him—to regard the whole bargain she had made as distasteful, now that she held the fruits of it safe within her grasp.

"Is it too late, Grant?" she asked, suddenly, her face flaming with the import of her words. Then, without waiting for him to answer, she rose and stood beside his chair, her hand upon his arm. "You should have taken me, Grant. I was a fool—such a fool. Why didn't you?"

"I was the fool," he groaned, not daring to look at her.

She passed her hand slowly along his arm, resting it at last upon his shoulder. The caressing movement thrilled him. He looked up at her, his lips parted. "Is it too late?" she asked again, her eyes burning into his.

For a moment he grew cold again, as his innate fear of her swept over him. Even so the rabbit, fascinated by the charm of the cobra's eyes, essays to flee, yet has not the strength to do so. "Is it?" he whispered—making no effort to touch her. "You can tell—better than I. I have heard—things—about you—and Allington." He paused, gazing at her, uncertain.

"What things?" she demanded, suddenly alert.

"That you and he were to be married."

"It isn't true—Grant—it isn't. He is nothing to me—nothing at all. He wants me to marry him, but I don't love him—I've refused." She thought the letter lying unsent in her desk upstairs made this the truth. "I've refused, because—because of you. I wrote you to come to me—you know that—I thought you hated me and would not answer." In her fear of losing him, she leaned toward him, the words fairly tumbling from her dry lips. "I

have thought of you—of nothing—of no one but you—always—all these long, long months. I have waited for you—hoped for you—I don't know what you must think of me—for saying all this to you, but I can't help it—I love you—I love you—my God! Grant, don't you *see?*" With a half-gasp, half-sob, she flung herself into his arms—her own thrust blindly out, seeking his neck, twining themselves about it. "Grant! Grant!" she whispered.

Everything in Chandler's mind, every doubt of her, every fear of her was for the moment swept away. He put his arms about her lithe, trembling body and strained her to him. "I want you—you—nothing—no one but you—ever—you shall never go away from me again!"

Her breath came through her half-open lips in a long, trembling sigh. She felt that she had won and the future seemed to reel before her, a vision of delight. "Take me," she whispered, "take me!" she closed her eyes, her face upturned, expectant.

The perfume of her, the close, pulsing contact of her body, the passion which swept her and him like a hot blast, sent the blood rioting to his brain, brought a cessation of thought. Now he only felt—all existence seemed comprised in a single emotion, the desire to keep her always thus, within his arms, to prolong forever the consuming delight of the moment. He drew her face to his—their lips met—it seemed as though their souls rushed into each other's bodies to the blaring music of some elemental pagan harmony. Nature, in the background, looked on with grim satisfaction. It was all so simple.

"Grant! Grant!" Emmy moaned, lying limp in his arms, her lips hungrily seeking his. "I love you—I'm mad about you—I never want to leave you again! Grant!"

Suddenly, through the throbbing tumult of her passion,

she heard the sound of a motor, furiously driven upon the soft gravel road without, followed by a quick ringing of the doorbell. She sprang to her feet—frightened—her face white. In an instant she reached the electric button on the wall and pressed it with shaking fingers, while with her other hand she clutched at her bosom. Chanler rose and looked after her, surprised. "What is it, Emmy?" he asked.

She made no reply, waiting in nervous dread, as she heard the sound of the opening door.

"What it is?" he repeated, coming toward her, smiling. There was no answering smile upon her lips. She watched the door, her face sullen as winter. Some intuition, some sense of coming disaster, gripped her.

The servant, impassive, grave, came to the door of the room. "Lord Allington and Miss Janet are here," he announced, woodenly.

Emmy gave a cry. "But—I—I can't see them now. I told you I was not at home to any one."

"So I says to them, madam, but they insists upon coming in. Wouldn't listen to me, madam." He drew aside as Allington and Janet burst into the room, bringing with them a blast of fresh, cold, sweet-smelling air that drove the blood from Chanler's brain and left him silent and constrained.

"It's all right, Emmy!" Allington cried, rushing up to her and grasping her trembling hands. In his excitement he did not for the moment see Chanler. "The governor has consented at last." He pumped her arms up and down with a fervor most unusual in him. "Nothing to prevent our announcing the engagement at once." Janet meanwhile came up to Chanler and greeted him with grave

"It's all right, Emmy!" Allington cri

to her and grasping her trembling hands.

sweetness. "Lord Alfred is very happy," she said, simply. "He and Emmy are going to be married."

Emmy crouched back against the wall, her eyes fixed on Chanler's face. For a moment he seemed about to speak; before he could do so, she wheeled on Allington, at the same time drawing away her hands. "No! no!" she cried, and turned again to Chanler.

He met her frightened glances with set face, then stepped toward the astonished nobleman. "I congratulate you, Lord Allington," he said, a momentary quiver in his voice. "I did not know."

"By Jove! of course you didn't. Nobody did. We've been keeping it secret for weeks. The mater was all right, but the earl—well—you don't know him. If you did, you'd understand." He shook Chanler's hand warmly. "Thanks for your congratulations, old chap. I deserve them." He looked at Emmy with a fatuous smile.

Emmy came unsteadily toward the two men. Her whole world seemed crumbling away. "Lord Alfred," she said, hoarsely, "I—I've changed my mind. I can't marry you—I can't—I can't!"

Allington turned to her, bewildered. "You can't marry me?" he repeated, mechanically. "Why not?" Then looked at Chanler with dull suspicion.

The latter stood gazing from Emmy to Janet. Emmy's blazing passion, her white, tortured face, her evident intention to throw aside Allington, all angered him. Janet, fresh, serene, exquisitely lovely, watched the scene before her with untroubled eyes. However much or little she may have suspected, have understood, she gave no sign. Chanler saw that the decision was his—that upon his next words rested the fate of all four of them. For a moment he re-

membered Emmy's passionate embraces, then the love for Janet which had for weeks been glowing in his heart burst into flame, burning away the dross. The hot, scented room sickened him—he longed for the clear, sweet air of the fields.

The decision rested with him, and he made it instantly. "Mrs. Ransome," he said, turning to the bewildered Allington, "has been speaking to me about your engagement. We were very old friends. She feared that perhaps on account of your family's objection it might be best——"

Emmy interrupted him with a cry. She saw, horrified, what he meant to do. "No! no!" she burst out. "Grant, stop!"

Chanler went on, heedless of her words, his face turned to Emmy, stern, impassive, cold. The duplicity, the falseness of the woman made him almost hate her. "Now that Lord Allington's family have removed their objections, let me be the first to congratulate you." He held out his hand to her, his eyes fixed on hers, and in them she saw that, do what she might, Chanler was lost to her forever.

She read the message of finality, of contempt, and for the fraction of a second hesitated, then slowly took his hand. "Thank you," she said, in a toneless voice. "You are very good," then turned away. There were no tears in her eyes, but through her brain ran the words of Chanler's book. "Let no woman despise passion, but woe be unto those who . . . seek not beyond for the things of the soul."

Janet accompanied Chanler to the door; they both felt impelled to leave Emmy and her fiancé alone. As he went he held her hand for a moment in his. "I am stopping in the village to-night," he said. "Won't you come and

walk with me to-morrow? I'd rather not come here—there are some things I must tell you—would it be too much to ask to have you meet me in front of the inn at eleven?"

"I should be glad to," she said, with a happy smile. "Good-night."

CHAPTER XXV

Although it was nearly eleven o'clock when Janet left the house the next morning, her stepmother had not yet come downstairs. As a matter of fact, Emmy had spent an almost sleepless night. Thoughts of Chanler tortured her throughout all the bitter hours until the dawn. Before she finally fell into an uneasy and restless sleep, even the prospect of her coming marriage to Allington and the assurance that she would one day become Countess of Wroxeter dwindled to insignificance. Singularly enough, she blamed Chanler, blamed also to some extent Janet, and particularly the unfortunate circumstance of Lord Alfred's arrival the night before. With but a few hours of grace she felt that all would have been as she wished—a short interview with Allington, and she would have been free to announce her engagement to Chanler without fear of any unpleasant consequences. In all her bitterness of heart, she did not once blame herself. It did not occur to her that had her love for Chanler been really worthy of the name she would never have given Lord Alfred's proposal a moment's consideration. Even at the time of Chanler's arrival the night before she had not had the courage to send the letter she had written to Allington breaking off their engagement. It was characteristic of Emmy always to play safe; the fear that Chanler might not respond to her advances left her unwilling to throw Lord Alfred over. Love would have sent her to the battle unhampered, ready to stake everything with high courage upon the single

issue, willing to win or lose all. Desire alone, springing from less exalted motives, left her cautious, a bargainer with fate. She fell asleep at last, with the uneasy conviction that in some way she had failed, but this was as near as she came to a realization of the truth.

Janet, in a russet skirt, white sweater-coat and tam-o'-shanter cap, went down the avenue of elms which led to the road, with joy singing in her heart, and showing itself in the brightness of her eyes, the soft flush of her cheeks, the swinging elasticity of her stride. She had far more time than was necessary to reach the village in season for her meeting with Chanler, yet the longing in her heart to see him sent her running down the long gravel road with the happy eagerness of a child.

The day was golden with the brightness of the late October sun. Although there had been frost the night before the air seemed almost spring-like, with an extraordinary and brilliant blue in the sky overhead in spite of the soft autumnal haze which lay upon the brown hillsides. There was very little wind, scarcely enough to disturb the few leaves which still clung in pathetic brown masses upon the oaks and elms; what little there was blew the girl's clustering hair in lovely disorder about her face. The rapid walk sent the blood coursing brilliantly through her cheeks; when she came upon Chanler, who, unconscious of her approach, was engaged in watching the efforts of a carter to start a balky horse, he felt a sudden uplifting of his heart, a sense of sweet and fragrant freshness which seemed rightly a part of the golden morning. The torturing memories of the hot, passion-laden night fled like wraiths at her coming.

He joined her, strangely silent, in spite of her joyous greeting. The knowledge of his blindness, his folly, the

evening before, pressed heavily upon him, made him uncertain of himself. How glibly he had talked to her of passion and its pitfalls—of the loftier heights to which love should aspire, yet in the course of a single hour he had repudiated all his own doctrines and fallen a ready victim to the spell of Emmy's wiles. He knew, now, that what he had felt for her had not been love—he despised her for her duplicity, as he despised himself for his weakness. The thought that he, with all his finely drawn theories, should have grasped the apple as eagerly as the first man grasped it and prepared to eat, hurt him through and through. Were his theories, then, all wrong? Had the ages carried us no step beyond the primitive instincts of the cave-dweller? He glanced at Janet's sweet face, and a flush of shame swept over him as he saw in it his answer.

He had asked her to meet him to-day, with a feeling that he owed her some sort of an apology. It is true he had not made love to Janet, in the accepted sense. He owed her no explanation of his presence in Emmy's drawing-room the night before. And yet something told him that before he went away he must tell Janet the whole story. He wanted her, at least, to understand. It seemed, in fact, imperatively important to him that she *should* understand; then he would go away, he told himself, and try to forget.

They set out along the main street of the village, running crookedly between rough stone walls covered with ivy, or brown faded hedges, behind which quaint old houses, sheltered by gaunt oaks and elms, spoke of simple, homely, earthy things.

At the head of the village a charming lane led off to the westward, rising between hedges and stubble fields toward the hills. Chanler had no mind to walk the broad high-

way—he longed to get away to the solitude, the sweetness of the woods. "Shall we go this way?" he asked her, and saw from her quick assent that she shared his feelings.

The lane wound upward, between occasional farm-houses, toward a stile which gave entrance to a heavily wooded hillside, a part of the Wroxeter estates. Some twenty minutes of brisk walking had brought them thus far—Chanler looked inquiringly at his companion and nodded toward the woods. "Suppose we explore it?" he said.

Janet agreed, smiling. "Isn't the country wonderful!" she said. "I don't see how people can bear to live in the city with all this beauty so near at hand. I love every leaf, every stone, every breath of it." She passed over the stile, refusing his help. "You must forget that I'm a woman to-day," she said. "We're just comrades, friends, children, looking for a fairy ring in the forest."

They strolled along the winding leaf-covered path in silence. No sound came to them save the crackling of leaves and twigs beneath their feet and the lowing of cattle in the distant village. Occasionally a squirrel darted across their path and once a stone, carelessly thrown by Chanler, started a frightened rabbit to headlong flight down the hillside. There was a wonder-peace in the air—as though nature was resting, after the labors of the fruitful summer.

The path led up between larch, and elm, and oak, to the crest of the slope, where, in a partial clearing, stood a tumble-down summer-house, which some former holder of the title had built because of the view. It was high noon when they reached it, and they sank upon a rustic bench, breathless after their long climb.

During the ascent but little had been said between them; as Janet remarked, it seemed a day for silence.

The beauty of the morning, the sweet freshness of all about him, caused Chanler to realize, as he had never realized before, the wonder of all simple and natural things. His philosophies of life now seemed far away, product of a materialistic civilization. Toiling, scheming, grasping, possessing, the gold and purple shame of success, the lusts of the flesh, how they faded to insignificance, compared with the sweetness and peace of Nature. All about them were the tall and splendid oaks, defying corruption, bespeaking a simple steadfastness of purpose which storm and stress but made more rugged and fine. Beneath their feet spread the kindly breast of mother earth, sweet-smelling, fragrant with wholesomeness, ever ready to provide bountifully for man's material needs. Far down in the valley lay the fields, some newly plowed and brown, some yellow with the stubble of the gathered harvest. The crisp, sweet air, the warm, mellow sunlight enfolded them in a soft mantle of purity.

Chanler looked at Janet, as she sat quiet beside him, and realized how fully she was a part of all their surroundings. During their meetings in London, in crowded streets, over restaurant tables, this feeling had not come to him, but now he knew why she had always breathed to him a spirit of peace. She was of Nature, a part of her great force, yet not of that side of Nature which drags down and destroys, but of the side which uplifts, and builds, and produces. Nature had always seemed to him to be but the manifestation of a single force; now he began to realize that even in Nature there are warring forces, those which build up, and those which tear down; the sun that warms, the frost that blights and kills—the forces that produce

and the forces that destroy. Each has its function—its part—from their conflict comes forth the perfect fruit.

Through all this he began to see that Janet represented within herself the ideal toward which he had all his life been blindly groping. Simplicity, purity—honesty radiated from her and gave him peace.

"I am happy—very happy," he said, looking into her eyes.

She returned his look frankly. "So am I," she said. "On such a day as this it makes one happy, just to be alive."

"I have been alive for a good many years," replied Chanler, with a somewhat rueful smile, "but I do not remember ever having been quite so happy as I am to-day. It seems as though from now on everything would be different with me, as though I had in some miraculous way escaped a great danger."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand," said Janet, puzzled. "Was there—something that happened last night?"

"Yes, last night and—and to-day." He took her hand quietly into his. "Ever since I have known you, Janet, I have been unlearning so much that I thought was true, and finding out the truth of so many things that I had come to laugh at and despise. Some day I will tell you all about it, but not now. To-day seems made for things which are sweet and pure and beautiful, like yourself. I would rather not spoil it with those other things which I am trying to forget."

"If you wish to forget them," she said, gravely, "why speak of them at all—ever. Perhaps I have understood more than you think. In some way I, too, felt last night as though a great danger hung over me—as though I had

come very near to losing something which was very dear to me. I felt afraid——" She stopped, suddenly confused, and the color leaped into her face. "I—I suppose I should not have said that. I—I hope you will not think——" She paused, helpless, before his wondering look.

Chanler raised her hand to his lips and kissed it, almost reverently. "What could I think about you," he said, "that was not sweet and beautiful always? When I came here to-day I meant to tell you about last night—about all the things that went before, but now—I somehow feel afraid."

She drew away her hand, slowly. "Perhaps you need not tell me," she said. "I have known about—about some things for a long time. I am sorry that you have been so troubled—that you have suffered so much—but now it is all over, is it not?"

"Yes, it is all over. I have gone about for a long time with an ideal in my heart, only to find that it was false, and ignoble, and worthless. But I have found more than that, for when the old ideal had crumbled to dust I found that a new one had come to take its place—one so wonderful—so beautiful, so fine, that even now I scarcely dare speak of it." His look, his earnestness, made her feel very happy. She had loved him ever since their first meeting in Paris, but with divine unselfishness had wished for his happiness alone, whether it took him from her or not. Now she knew from his words that it lay in her hands at last. The thought almost terrified her, for she loved him very greatly. "Some day you must tell me all about it," she whispered.

"What can I ever tell you, dear," he said, "except that I love you?" He took her hands and drew her, unresisting,

toward him, striving to look into her faltering eyes. "Tell me, dear, do you—care?"

She raised her eyes with a brave smile, unconscious of the tears of happiness which welled into them. "Oh, Grant!" she whispered. "It is the only thing I care about in the whole world."

Even when she lay happily in his arms he could not at first bring himself to kiss her, but pressed his lips with a reverent tenderness to her soft hair. Love, the love which had now come to him, and which he for the first time understood, came gently, almost religiously, bearing with it a grave sense of responsibility for another's soul. Yet when he at last drew her face to his and their lips met, he knew that beneath the purity of the snows lay all the warmth of the fruitful earth; that while love had come to Janet, a vestal virgin, it found her none the less a woman.

CHAPTER XXVI

From Emilie, Countess of Wroxeter, to Mrs. Harvey Cook, Gainesville, Ohio:

WALSINGHAM COURT, *Tavistone, Surrey.*

DEAR KATIE:

I have been thinking of you so much of late—you and the children. I wish I might see you. I am terribly tired of it here—tired of everything.

I have been rummaging through some old papers to-day, and I suppose it has made me blue. Among other things I came across a lot of letters I once wrote to a man—a man that I never expected to see again. Some of them were so wonderful—it seems strange that I should ever have felt like that—waiting, longing for *his* arms.

There is something terrifying about reading things that one has written, after so many years. It doesn't often happen, for mostly they are in other people's hands, or in the waste-basket. These were sent back to me—that's how I happened to have them. Reading such things cuts through the scars that time has made, like a knife, and lays bare the nerves still quivering as of old.

I'm blue, Katie, awfully blue, and I haven't any one to write to about it but you. I have thought of putting things into a book at times—just the things that have happened—I have been jotting some of them down in my diary of late, but it's too hard, and I never could publish

them, anyway, so I am going to inflict my thoughts on you, Katie. I hope you won't mind.

It isn't considered good form here to write. Lady Haughton—she's Alfred's aunt, you know—said at dinner last night that literary people were "essentially underbred, stealing into one's drawing-room under the cloak of respectability, only to sneak off and write up their experiences at so much a line." "Social leeches," she called them. I don't even dare to let her see me writing in my diary.

The old Dowager Duchess of Bradford caught me at it once and she has been circulating nasty stories ever since, to the effect that I am at work on a novel, showing up the private life of the aristocracy. What an idea! The newspapers do it infinitely better. I fancy, however, that this may explain Lady Haughton's remark of last night.

They both hate me because I am an American and have a lovely complexion and an almost perfect figure instead of brick-red cheeks and the lines of a Percheron—or a clothes-horse. I wish they might read this letter, Katie. I can just see Lady Haughton's thin, aristocratic and scandal-seeking nose go up another inch as she bows to me. You ought to see her, Katie. When she bows she creaks—actually creaks—as though she needed oiling. Helen Napier was the only one of the lot that I could really care about, but she's gone to live in St. Petersburg with her husband, who was transferred there last month.

Alfred is so drunk most of the time, and so busy these past few months with his latest actress, to say nothing of his goings on with Lucile, my maid, that I scarcely ever see him. He thinks I don't know about Lucile, but I saw him hugging her only last night in the garden.

He passed me a little while ago on his way out from breakfast. I had just begun this letter, and he asked me,

with a nasty grin, if I was making my will. I should think he would be satisfied with the settlements he has already gotten without talking about wills. Anyway, there is mighty little danger of his ever hearing mine, if he goes on drinking the way he has been doing this past year.

I am sitting on the terrace of Walsingham Court, which, you know, is our Surrey place. I like it here better than at Elverstone Towers, or Sydenham, or The Manor, especially in the autumn, and then the shooting keeps Alfred out of the way most of the time. *He* likes it because he can motor up to town in an hour and a half, and that is important, of course, when one has an actress on the string. Or has she Alfred on the string? I confess I don't know, or care.

You would love it here, Katie. This English country is so dear—not grand, like the Alps, or wonderful, like the Riviera, but so *human*, and, then, they keep it so well.

As I sit here I can see away off to the left the queer little village of Tavistone—a love of a place—just like some tiny toy town, perched on an emerald hillside and apparently in imminent danger of toppling off into the road below.

Our park runs all the way to the road, which must be at least half a mile off, and the beautiful lawns roll right up to my feet, dotted here and there with clumps of white oaks, the finest I have ever seen. Under a group of them, not far away, is a lily pond, around the marble edge of which three splendid peacocks are strutting, their tails glistening in the sunshine like great jeweled fans. I wish little Harvey and the baby could see them. Wouldn't they be wild?

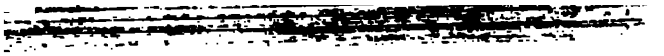
We have only had this place since the old earl died

and Alfred got the title. He never liked me, and persisted in calling me "that woman." Never to my face, of course, but I heard about it. Nevertheless, if it hadn't been for me this place would be the same tumbled-down wreck that it was while he was alive, instead of one of the finest places in England. Actually, there wasn't a bathroom!

It's awfully quiet, of course, but the London season is always trying, and I suppose I did a little more than my share this summer. All the men seem to like me as much as the women don't. As I sit here this morning there isn't a sound except an occasional shot in the distance. The beaters haven't got the drive well under way yet. Lucile has fixed my pillows especially well and I am filled with a delicious sense of peace, but it is a peace of the body only. My soul is anything but peaceful. You will wonder at all this, of course, and say I'm a lucky woman who has realized all her ambitions. It doesn't always make us happy, Katie, to realize our ambitions. I've found that out.

Maybe you were right, dear, after all, when you married Harvey. I don't know. I don't seem to be very happy, and I know that you are, even if you have only one servant and live in Gainesville. You've got children and the man you love, and happiness, and I've got—Alfred, and the right to go to the coronation.

Alfred is hateful—a beast. I know I ought not to say this, Katie, but I can't help it. That's something I cannot understand about these Englishmen. They make love so delightfully—they are so jolly—so boyish—so amusing—before marriage And afterwards they are such pigs. However, the Duchess of Roxbury—she was Daisy Lorimer, of Cincinnati, you remember, and Lady Grafton, who once had all the Newport set at her feet, are both worse off



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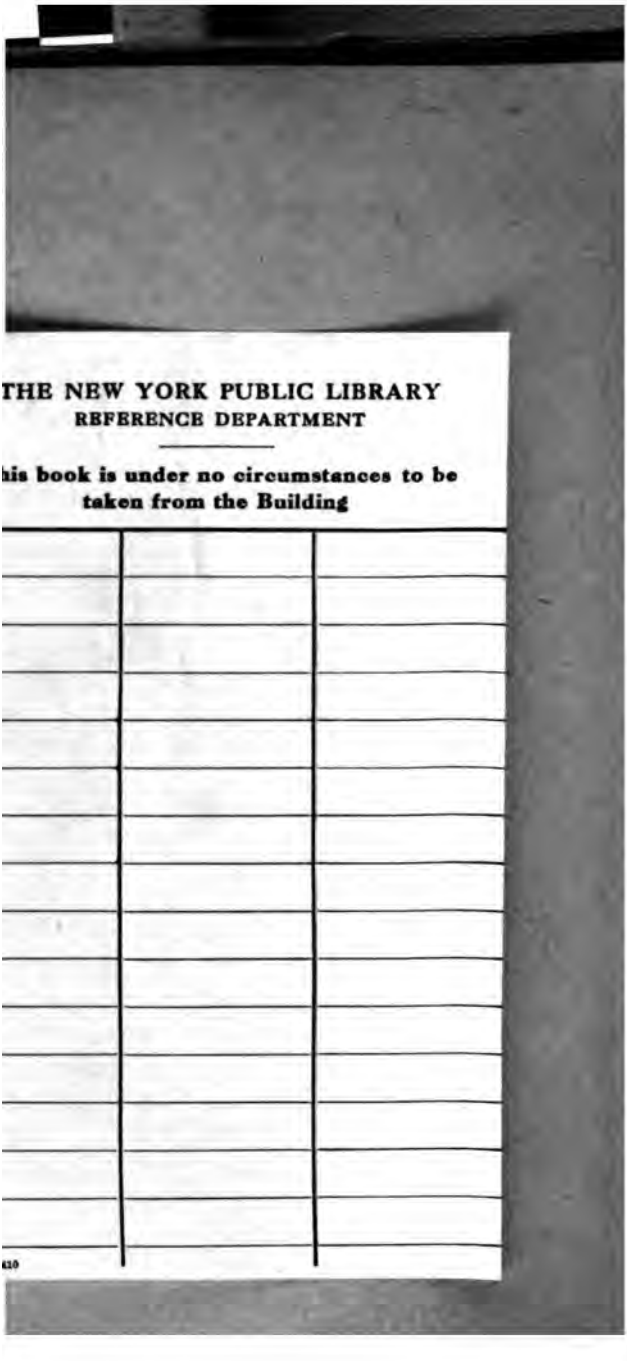
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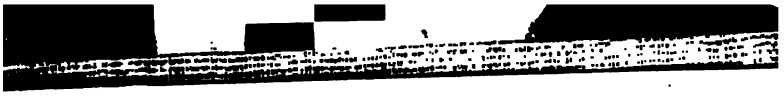
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